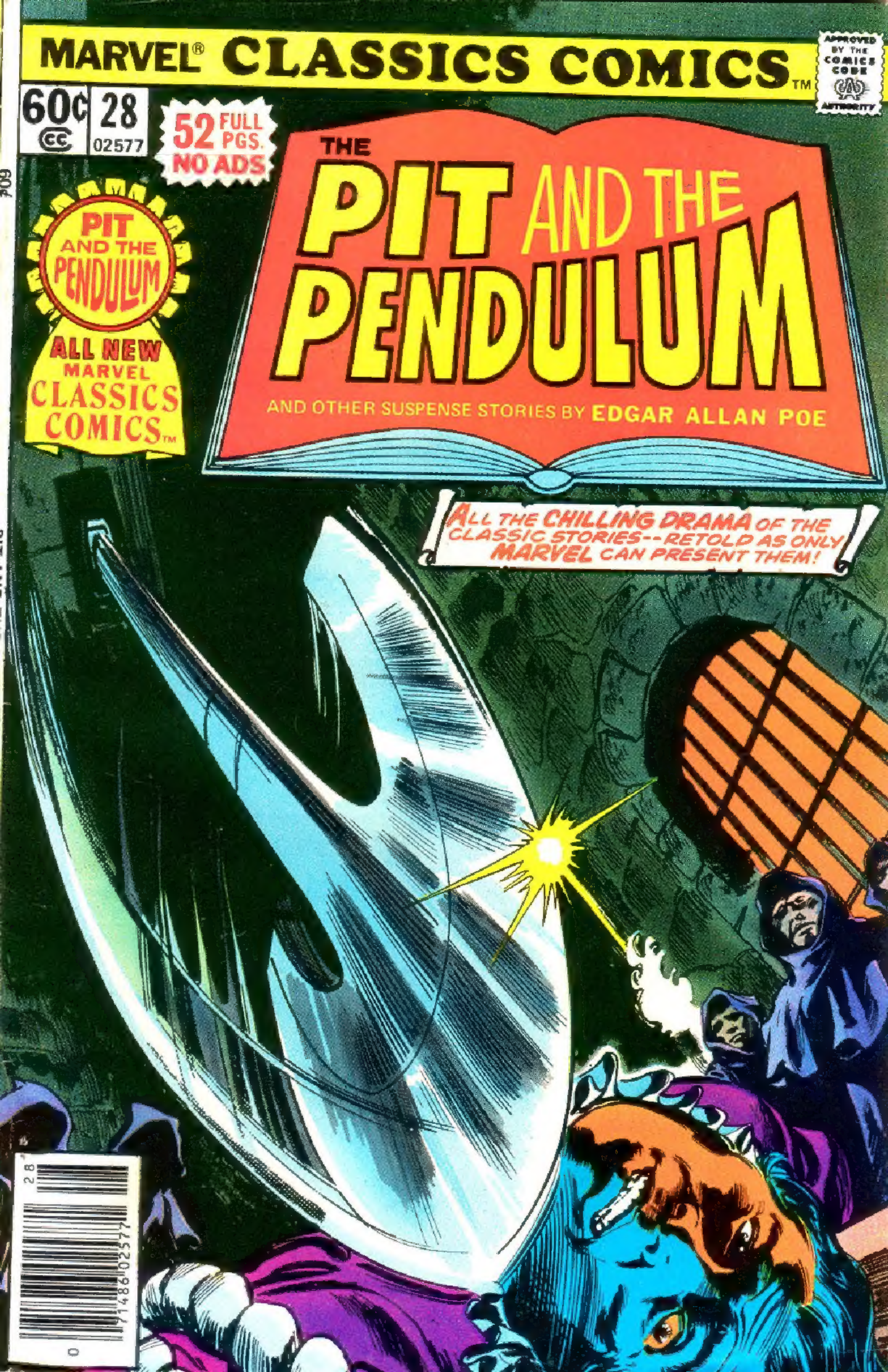
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PIT AND THE PENDULUM
ALL NEW MARVEL CLASSICS COMICS™
THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM
AND OTHER SUSPENSE STORIES BY EDGAR ALLAN POE
ALL THE CHILLING DRAMA OF THE CLASSIC STORIES--RETOLD AS ONLY MARVEL CAN PRESENT THEM!

STAN LEE presents

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

by Edgar Allan Poe

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston, Mass., January 19th, 1809. He received a fine primary education in England, and later attended the University of Virginia, in Charlottsville. He was prevented from returning to college after his first year due to family troubles, and instead enlisted for three years in the army. Upon his discharge, Poe entered the publishing field, eventually working up to a position of editor on a series of magazines he had nurtured in New York. In 1836, he married Virginia Clemm and for a short period, he was able to overcome his life-long nemesis — alcohol. His dependency on liquor had forced his departure from several promising publications he had been closely involved. In 1841, his young wife took seriously ill, and several years later, died. Poe lapsed into frequent alcoholic binges for weeks at a time and was afflicted with constant fits of delirium. In 1849, he died in Baltimore as the result of severe overdrinking.

As a man, Poe was a solitary figure, minus real family or friends. As a writer his most memorable works expose a mind deeply fascinated with death and the macabre. "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "Pit And The Pendulum" are superb examples of Poe's constant dwelling on insanity and the most hideous forms of torture. Written in first-person narrative, (as is so much of his prose) these tales have a chilling sense of twisted reality within them, almost as if Poe had in some way experienced the grotesque events he described in his mind.

Aside from the horror genre, Poe had written widely on many diverse subjects. His long essay "Eureka" is a profound treatise on the ultimate nature of existence. Also, Poe is credited with the invention of the detective story, the prime example being, "The Purloined Letter" and he even dabbled in broad satire, as evidenced in, "The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall."

Despite a short and unhappy life, Poe wrote profusely and well. His work has been adapted into many mediums and is enjoyed by succeeding generations of readers.

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THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM
--FOR DEATH LONG AGONY UNBOUND
SEES
THE SENTENCE--
--THE DREAD SENTENCE OF DEATH--
--WAS THE LAST DISTINCT ACCENTUATION WHICH REACHED MY EARS. AFTER THAT, THE SOUND OF THE INQUISITORIAL VOICES SEEMED MERGED IN ONE DREAMY INDETERMINATE HUM.

FOR A WHILE, I SAW; BUT WITH HOW TERRIBLE AN EXAGGERATION!
I SAW THE LIPS OF THE BLACK-ROBED JUDGES.
I SAW THEM WRITHE WITH A DEADLY LOCUTION.
I SAW THEM FASHION THE SYLLABLES OF MY NAME--
--AND I SHUDDERED BECAUSE NO SOUND SUCCEEDED.
AND THEN MY VISION FELL UPON THE SEVEN TALL CANDLES UPON THE TABLE.
AT FIRST THEY WORE THE ASPECT OF CHARITY--
--AND SEEMED WHITE SLENDER ANGELS WHO WOULD SAVE ME--
--BUT THEN, ALL AT ONCE, THERE CAME A MOST DEADLY NAUSEA OVER MY SPIRIT--
--WHILE THE ANGEL FORMS BECAME MEANINGLESS SPECTRES--
--WITH HEADS OF FLAME--
--AND I SAW THAT FROM THEM--
--THERE WOULD BE NO HELP.

AND THEN THERE STOLE INTO MY FANCY--
--LIKE A RICH MUSICAL NOTE--
THE THOUGHT OF WHAT SWEET REST THERE MUST BE--
--IN THE GRAVE.
BUT JUST AS MY SPIRIT--
--CAME AT LENGTH PROPERLY TO FEEL AND ENTERTAIN IT--
--THE FIGURES OF THE JUDGES VANISHED--
--AS IF MAGICALLY, FROM BEFORE ME--
--THE TALL CANDLES SANK INTO NOTHINGNESS--
--THEIR FLAMES WENT OUT UTTERLY--
--ALL SENSATIONS APPEARED SWALLOWED UP--
--IN A MAD RUSHING DESCENT AS OF THE SOUL INTO HADES.
THEN SILENCE--
AND STILLNESS
--AND NIGHT IN THE UNIVERSE.

I HAD SWOONED BUT STILL WILL NOT SAY THAT ALL OF CONSCIOUSNESS WAS LOST.
IN THE DEEPEST SLUMBER--NO!
IN DEATH--NO!
EVEN IN THE GRAVE ALL IS NOT LOST.
ELSE THERE IS NO IMMORTALITY FOR MAN.
IN THE RETURN TO LIFE FROM THE SWOON THERE ARE TWO STAGES.
FIRST, THAT OF THE SENSE OF MENTAL--
--OR SPIRITUAL.
SECONDLY, THAT OF THE SENSE OF PHYSICAL--
--EXISTENCE.
IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT IF UPON REACHING THE SECOND STAGE--
--LIFE COULD RECALL THE IMPRESSIONS OF THE FIRST--
--WE SHOULD FIND THESE IMPRESSIONS ELOQUENT--
--IN MEMORIES OF THE GULF BEYOND.
AND THAT GULF IS... WHAT?
HOW AT LEAST SHALL WE FISTINGUISH ITS SHADOWS FROM THOSE OF THE TOMB?

SOMETIMES THE IMPRESSIONS OF THE FIRST STAGE COME UNBIDDEN--
--WHILE WE MARVEL FROM WHENCE THEY CAME.
HE WHO HAS NEVER SWOONED--
--IS NOT HE WHO FINDS STRANGE PALACES--
--AND WILDLY FAMILIAR FACES IN OWLS THAT GLOW--
--IS NOT HE WHO BEHOLDS FLOATING IN MID-AIR THE SAD VISIONS THAT MANY MAY NOT VIEW--
--IS NOT HE WHO PONDERS OVER THE PERFUME OF SOME NOVEL FLOWER--
--IS NOT HE WHOSE BRAIN GROWS BEWILDERED WITH THE MEANING OF SOME MUSICAL CADENCE--
--WHICH HAS NEVER BEFORE ARRESTED HIS ATTENTION.
AFTER THE INQUISITIONERS FINISHED THE WEARISOMENESS OF THEIR TOIL--
--AFTER THIS I CALL TO MIND FLATNESS AND DAMPNESS--
--AND THEN ALL IS MADNESS--
--THE MADNESS OF A MEMORY WHICH SUBSIDES ITSELF AMONG FORBIDDEN THINGS.

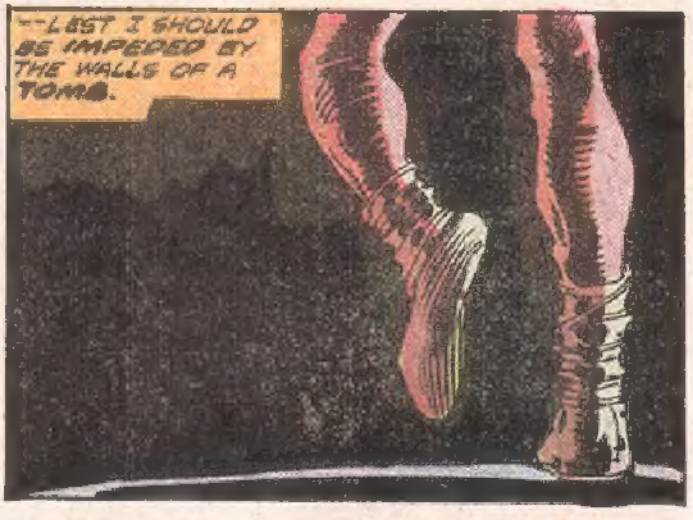
I STROVE TO IMAGINE WHERE AND WHAT I COULD BE.
I BROUGHT TO MIND THE INQUISITORIAL PROCEEDINGS--

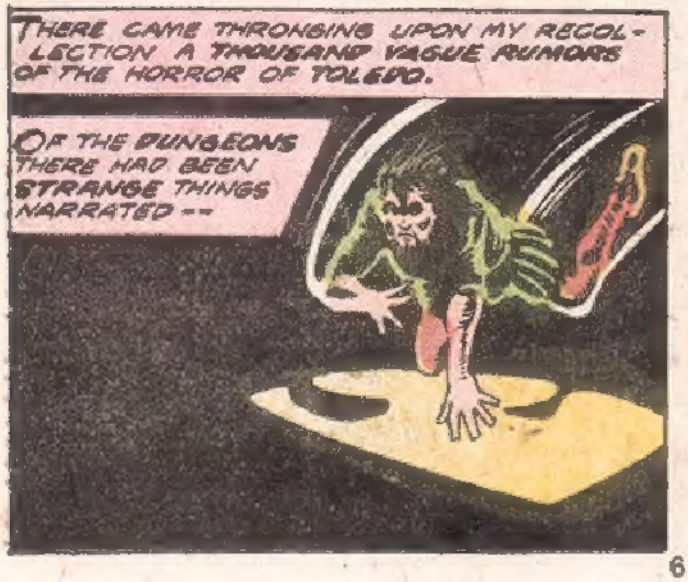
--AND ATTEMPTED FROM THAT POINT TO DEDUCE MY REAL CONDITION.

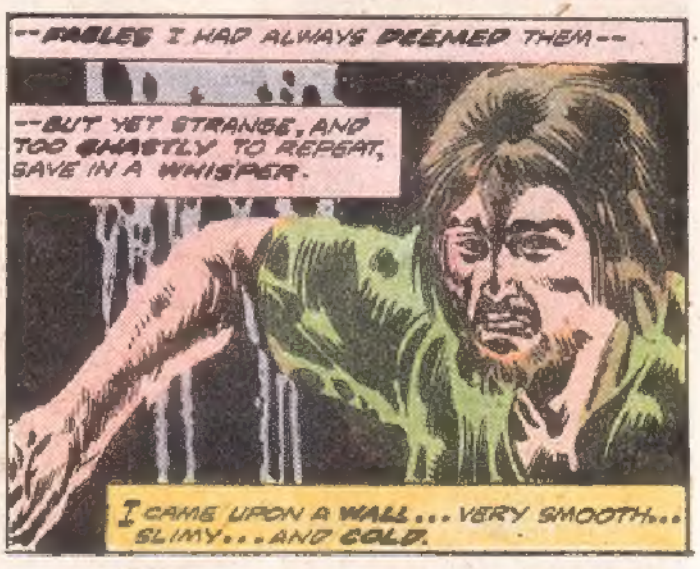
I THRUST MY ARMS WILDLY ABOVE AND AROUND ME IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

I FELT NOTHING --

--YET DREADED TO MOVE A STEP--


--LEST I SHOULD BE IMPEDED BY THE WALLS OF A TOMB.

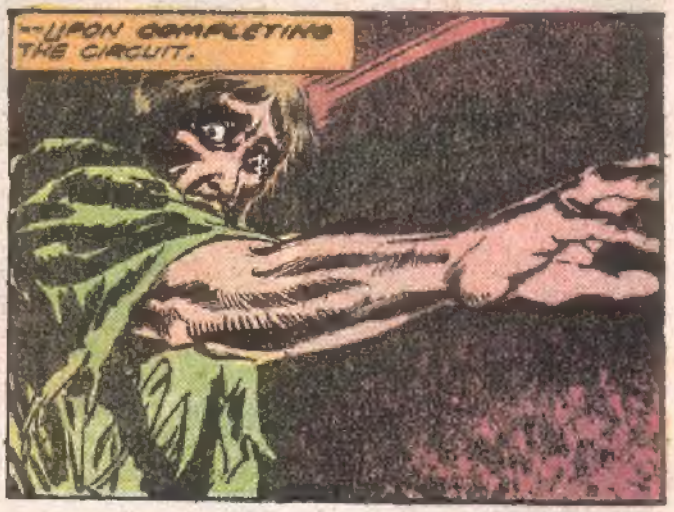

THERE CAME THRONGING UPON MY RECOLLECTION A THOUSAND VAGUE RUMORS OF THE HORROR OF TOLEDO.
OF THE DUNGEONS THERE HAD BEEN STRANGE THINGS NARRATED --


--FABLES I HAD ALWAYS DEEMED THEM--
--BUT YET STRANGE, AND TOO GHASTLY TO REPEAT, SAVE IN A WHISPER.
I CAME UPON A WALL... VERY SMOOTH... SLIMY... AND COLD.

I TORE A PART OF THE HEM FROM THE ROBE AND PLACED THE FRAGMENT AT RIGHT ANGLES TO THE WALL.

IN GROPING MY WAY AROUND THE PRISON--

--I COULD NOT FAIL TO ENCOUNTER THIS RAG--


--UPON COMPLETING THE CIRCUIT.

SO. AT LEAST I THOUGHT--

--BUT I HAD NOT COUNTED UPON THE EXTENT OF THE DUNGEON--
--OR UPON MY OWN WEAKNESS.

I STEPPED ON THE TORN HEM, AND FELL VIOLENTLY ON MY FACE.

MY FOREHEAD SEEMED BATHED IN A CLAMMY VAPOR..
--AND THE PECULIAR SMELL OF DECAYED FUNGUS AROSE TO MY NOSTRILS.

I HAD FALLEN AT THE VERY BRINK OF A CIRCULAR PIT.

I LET A PIECE OF MASONRY FALL INTO THE ABYSS.

KA FHUNK! KA KATED-KAT!

KA'SPLUNGE

A FAINT GLEAM OF LIGHT FLASHED SUDDENLY THROUGH THE GLOOM--

--AND AS SUDDENLY--

--FADED AWAY.

I SAW CLEARLY THE DOOM WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR ME.

AND THE DEATH JUST AVOIDED, WAS OF THAT VERY CHARACTER WHICH I HAD REGARDED AS FABULOUS AND FRIVOLOUS IN THE TALES RESPECTING--

--THE INQUISITION.

TO THE VICTIMS OF ITS TYRANNY, THERE WAS THE CHOICE OF DEATH WITH ITS DIREST PHYSICAL AGONIES--

--OR DEATH WITH ITS MOST HIDEOUS MORAL HORRORS.

I GROPED MY WAY BACK TO THE WALL; RESOLVING TO PERISH THERE RATHER THAN RISK THE TERRORS OF THE WELLS--

--OF WHICH MY IMAGINATION NOW PICTURED MANY IN VARIOUS POSITIONS ABOUT THE DUNGEON.

AT LENGTH I SLUMBERED AGAIN.

UPON AROUSING, I FOUND BY MY SIDE, A LOAF AND A PITCHER OF WATER.

A BURNING THIRST CONSUMED ME, AND I EMPTIED THE VESSEL AT A DRAUGHT.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN DRUGGED--
--FOR SCARCELY HAD I DRUNK, BEFORE I BECAME IRRESISTIBLY DROWSY
A DEEP SLEEP FELL UPON ME--
--A SLEEP LIKE THAT OF DEATH.
HOW LONG IT LASTED OF COURSE, I KNOW NOT; BUT WHEN, ONCE AGAIN, I UNCLOSED MY EYES --
-- THE OBJECTS AROUND ME WERE VISIBLE.
BY A WILD SULPHUROUS LUSTRE, I WAS ENABLED TO SEE THE EXTENT AND ASPECT OF THE PRISON.
THE GENERAL SHAPE OF THE PRISON WAS SQUARE. THE ENTIRE SURFACE OF THIS METALLIC ENCLOSURE WAS RUDELY DAUBED IN ALL THE HIDEOUS AND REPULSIVE DEVICES TO WHICH THE CHARNAL SUPERSTITION OF THE MONKS HAS GIVEN RISE.
THE FIGURES OF FIENDS IN ASPECT OF MENACE--
--WITH SKELETON FORMS --
--AND OTHER MORE REALLY FEARFUL IMAGES, OVERSPREAD AND DISFIGURED THE WALLS.

MY PERSONAL CONDITION HAD BEEN GREATLY CHANGED DURING SLUMBER.
I NOW LAY UPON MY BACK, AND AT FULL LENGTH, ON A SPECIES OF LOW FRAMEWORK OF WOOD.
TO THIS I WAS SECURELY BOUND BY A LONG STRAP IT PASSED IN MANY CONVOLUTIONS ABOUT MY LIMBS AND BODY --
--AND MY LEFT ARM TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT I COULD, BY DINT OF MUCH EXERTION, SUPPLY MYSELF WITH FOOD FROM AN EARTHEN DISH WHICH LAY BY MY SIDE.
--LEAVING AT LIBERTY ONLY MY HEAD --
LOOKING UPWARD, I SURVEYED THE CEILING OF MY PRISON.
IN ONE OF ITS PANELS A VERY SINGULAR FIGURE RIVETED MY WHOLE ATTENTION.
IT WAS THE PAINTED FIGURE OF TIME AS HE IS COMMONLY REPRESENTED, SAVE THAT, IN LIEU OF A SCYTHE, HE HELD WHAT I SUPPOSED TO BE THE PICTURED IMAGE --
--OF A HUGE PENDULUM.
LOOKING TO THE FLOOR, I SAW SEVERAL ENORMOUS RATS TRAVERSING IT.
THEY HAD ISSUED FROM THE WELL... WHICH LAY JUST WITHIN VIEW TO MY RIGHT.
THEY CAME IN TROOPS --
--HURRIEDLY--
-- WITH RAVENOUS EYES... ALLURED BY THE SCENT OF THE MEAT.

It might have been half an hour, perhaps even an hour, (for I could take but imperfect note of time) before I again cast my eyes upwards.
What I then saw confounded --
--and amazed me.
The sweep of the pendulum had increased in extent by nearly a yard.
But what mainly disturbed me was the idea that it had perceptively--
--descended.
Its nether extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about a foot in length from horn to horn... The horns upward --
--and the under edge evidently as keen as that of a razor.
Inch by inch--
--line by line--
--with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages --
--down--
--and still down it came!

THE ODOR OF THE SHARP STEEL FORCED ITSELF INTO MY NOSTRILS.
I GREW FRANTICALLY MAD--
--AND STRUGGLED TO FORCE MYSELF UPWARD AGAINST THE SWEEP OF THE FEARFUL SCIMITAR.
AND THEN I FELL SUDDENLY CALM--
--AND LAY SMILING AT THE GLITTERING DEATH--
--AS A CHILD AT SOME RARE BAUBLE.
EVEN AMID THE AGONIES OF THE PERIOD, THE HUMAN NATURE CRAVED FOOD.
WITH PAINFUL EFFORT I TOOK POSSESSION OF THE SMALL REMNANT WHICH HAD BEEN SPARED ME BY THE RATS.
THERE RUSHED TO MY MIND A HALF FORMED THOUGHT OF JOY-- OF HOPE.

YET WHAT BUSINESS HAD I WITH HOPE? IT WAS, AS I SAY, A HALF FORMED THOUGHT... MAN HAS MANY SUCH WHICH ARE NEVER COMPLETED.

I SAW THAT THE CRESCENT WAS DESIGNED TO CROSS THE REGION OF MY HEART. NOTWITHSTANDING ITS TERRIFICALLY WIDE SWEEP (SOME THIRTY FEET OR MORE) AND THE HISSING VIGOR OF ITS DESCENT--

--SUFFICIENT TO SUNDER THESE VERY WALLS OF IRON, STILL THE FRAYING OF MY ROBE WOULD BE ALL THAT FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, IT WOULD ACCOMPLISH.

I [illegible] ON THIS REFLECTION... [illegible] DWELLING, I COULD ARREST HERE [illegible] DESCENT OF STEEL..

DOWN--

--STEADILY DOWN IT CREPT.

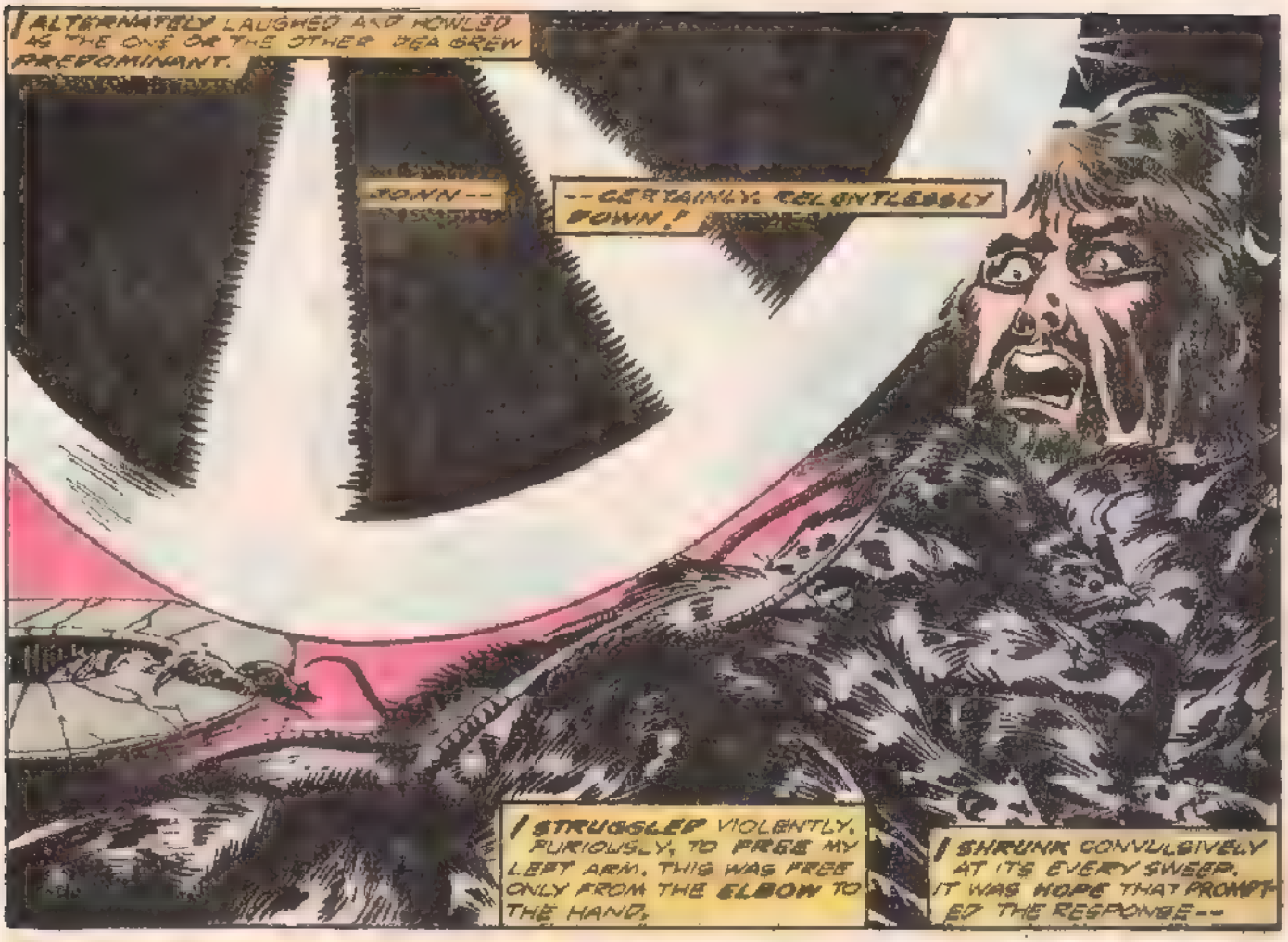
TO THE RIGHT--

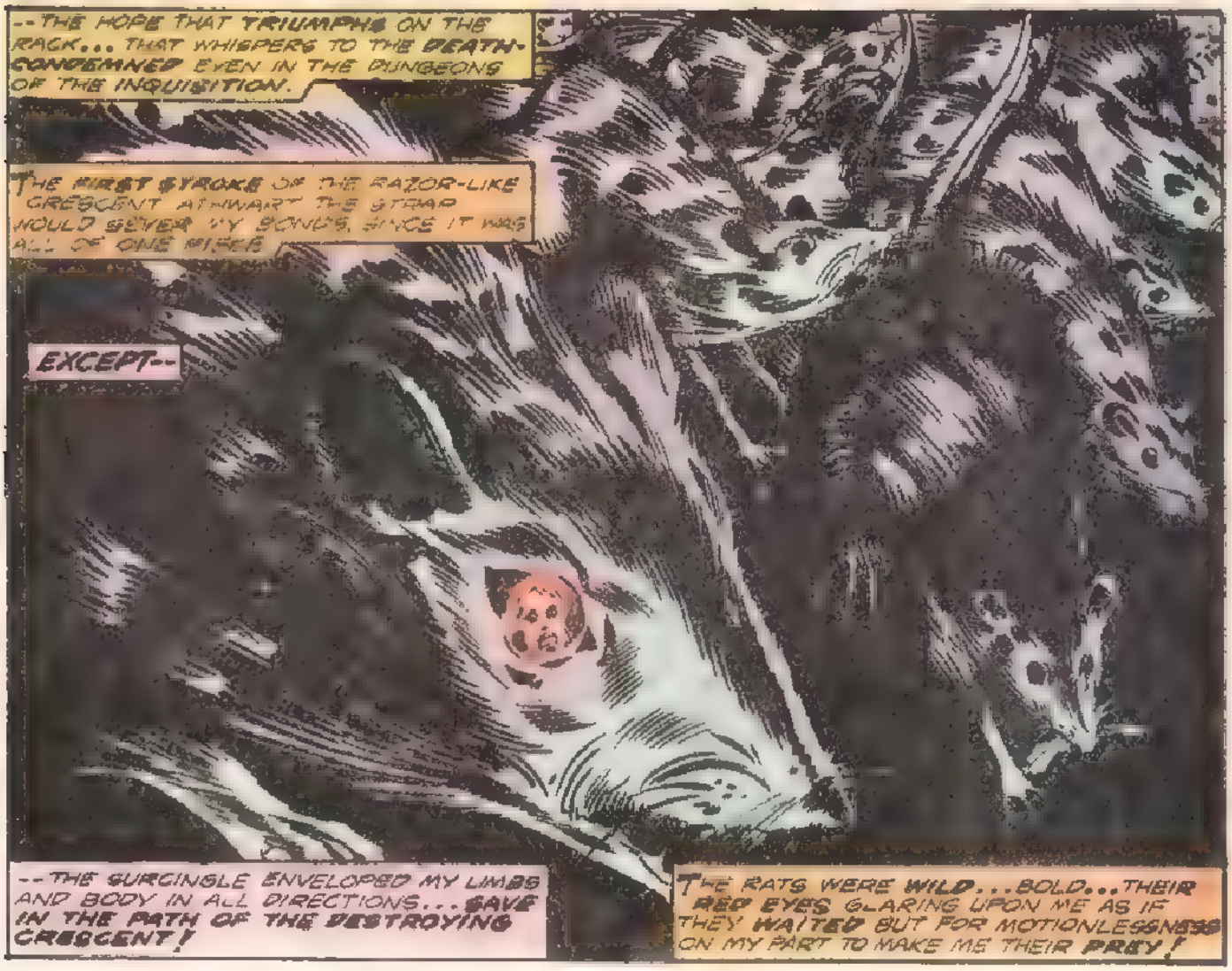
--TO THE LEFT--

--FAR AND WIDE--

--WITH SHRIEK OF A DAMNED SPIRIT--

--TO MY HEART WITH THE STEAL PAY PACE OF A TIGER!

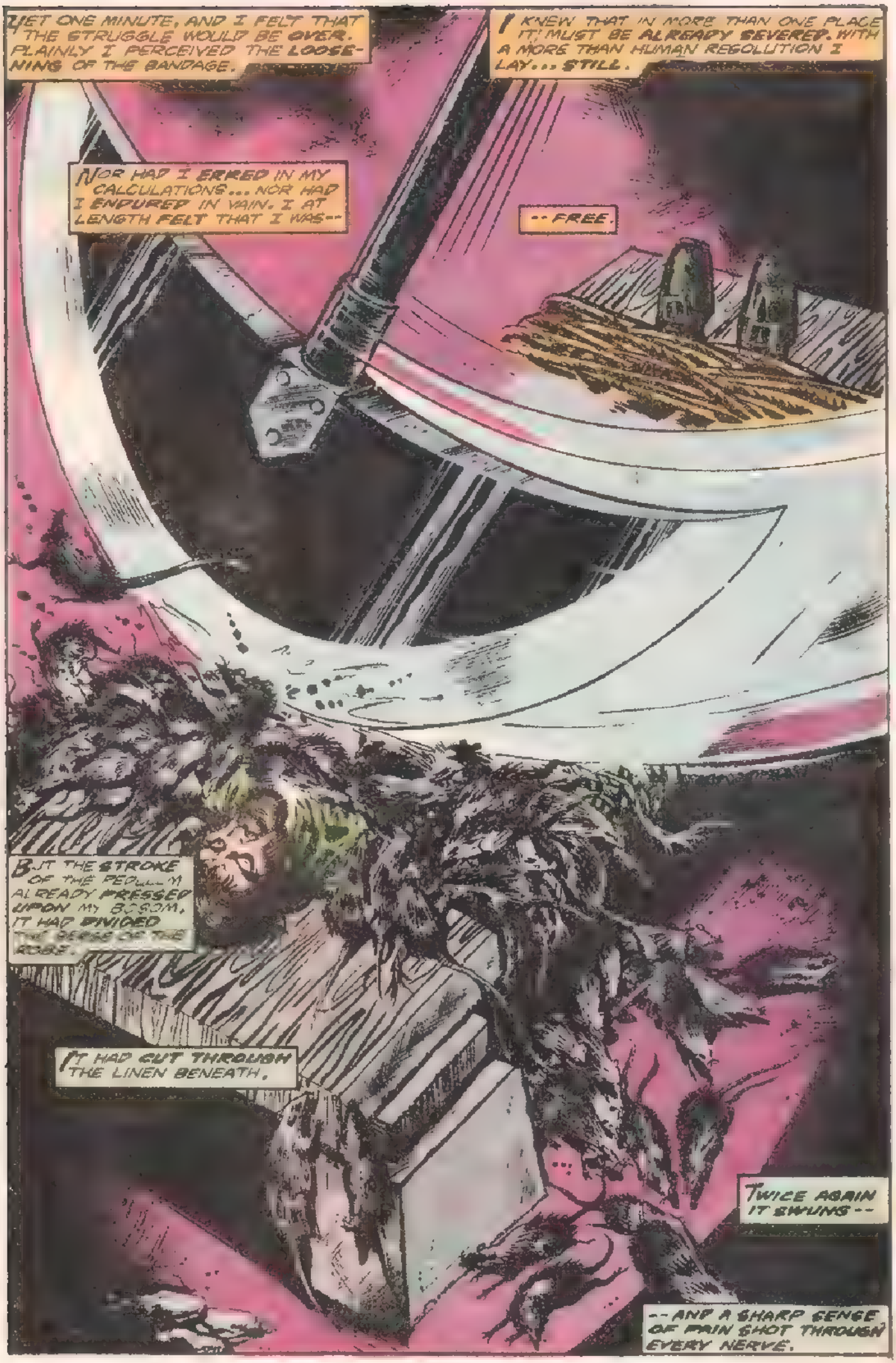

I ALTERNATELY LAUGHED AND HOWLED AS THE ONE OR THE OTHER PER BREW PREDOMINANT.
--DOWN--
--CERTAINLY, RELENTLESSLY DOWN!
I STRUGGLED VIOLENTLY, FURIOUSLY, TO FREE MY LEFT ARM. THIS WAS FREE ONLY FROM THE ELBOW TO THE HAND.
I SHRUNK CONVULSIVELY AT ITS EVERY SWEEP. IT WAS HOPE THAT PROMPTED THE RESPONSE--


--THE HOPE THAT TRIUMPHS ON THE RACK... THAT WHISPERS TO THE DEATH-CONDEMNED EVEN IN THE DUNGEONS OF THE INQUISITION.
THE FIRST STROKE OF THE RAZOR-LIKE CRESCENT ATHWART THE STRAP WOULD SEVER MY BONDS, SINCE IT WAS ALL OF ONE PIECE.
EXCEPT--
--THE GURGINGLE ENVELOPED MY LIMBS AND BODY IN ALL DIRECTIONS... SAVE IN THE PATH OF THE DESTROYING CRESCENT!
THE RATS WERE WILD... BOLD... THEIR RED EYES GLARING UPON ME AS IF THEY WAITED BUT FOR MOTIONLESSNESS ON MY PART TO MAKE ME THEIR PREY!

WITH THE PARTICLES OF THE OILY AND SPICY WAND WHICH NOW REMAINED, I THOROUGHLY RUBBED THE BANDAGE WHEREVER I COULD REACH IT... THEN, RAISING MY HAND FROM THE FLOOR, I LAY DEATHLY STILL
AT FIRST THE RAVENOUS CREATURES WERE STARTLED BY THE CESSATION OF MOVEMENT.
THEY SHRANK ALARMEDLY BACK ...MANY SOUGHT THE WELL.

I HAD NOT COUNTED IN VAIN ON THEIR VORACITY.
THEY LEAPED IN HUNDREDS UPON MY PERSON.

AVOIDING ITS STROKES THEY BLESSED THEMSELVES WITH THE ANNOINTED BANDAGE.
THEY PRESSED... THEY SWARMED UPON ME IN EVER ACCUMULATING HEAPS.
THEY WRITHED UPON MY THROAT--
--THEIR COLD LIPS SOUGHT MY OWN...
DISGUST FOR WHICH THE WORLD HAS NO NAME, SWELLED MY BOSOM--
--AND CHILLED, WITH A HEAVY LIGHTNESS, MY HEART.


YET ONE MINUTE, AND I FELT THAT THE STRUGGLE WOULD BE OVER. PLAINLY I PERCEIVED THE LOOSENING OF THE BANDAGE.
I KNEW THAT IN MORE THAN ONE PLACE IT MUST BE ALREADY SEVERED. WITH A MORE THAN HUMAN RESOLUTION I LAY... STILL.
NOR HAD I ERRED IN MY CALCULATIONS... NOR HAD I ENDURED IN VAIN. I AT LENGTH FELT THAT I WAS--
--FREE.
BUT THE STROKE OF THE PENDULUM ALREADY PRESSED UPON MY BOSOM. IT HAD RIVEN THE FOLDS OF THE ROBE.
IT HAD CUT THROUGH THE LINEN BENEATH.
TWICE AGAIN IT SWUNG--
--AND A SHARP SENSE OF PAIN SHOT THROUGH EVERY NERVE.

BUT THE MOMENT OF ESCAPE HAS ARRIVED.
AT A WAVE OF MY HAND MY DELIVERERS HURRIED TUMULTUOUSLY AWAY.
I SLID FROM THE EMBRACE OF THE SCIMITAR. FOR THE MOMENT, AT LEAST, I WAS FREE.
FREE!
I HAD SCARCELY STEPPED FROM MY WOOFEN BED OF HORROR, WHEN THE MOTION OF THE MELLON MACHINE CEASED AND I BEHELD IT DRAWN UP BY SOME INVISIBLE FORCE, THROUGH THE CEILING.
AND IN THE GRASP OF THE INQUISITION!

THIS WAS A LESSON WHICH I TOOK DESPERATELY TO HEART. MY EVERY MOTION WAS UNDOUBTEDLY WATCHED.
FREE!
I HAD BUT ESCAPED DEATH IN ONE FORM OF AGONY, TO BE DELIVERED UP TO WORSE DEATH IN SOME OTHER.
THE ORIGIN OF THE [illegible] LIGHT CAME FROM A FISSURE, EXTENDING ENTIRELY AROUND THE PRISON AT THE BASE OF THE WALLS... WHICH WERE COMPLETELY SEPARATED FROM THE FLOOR.
WITH THAT THOUGHT I ROLLED MY EYES NERVOUSLY AROUND ON THE BARRIERS OF IRON THAT HEMMED ME IN.
DEMON EYES--
--OF A WILD AND GHASTLY VIVACITY--
THE COLORS ON THE WALL WERE ASSUMING AN INTENSE BRILLIANCY... ...THAT GAVE TO THE SPECTRAL AND FIENDISH PORTRAITURES AN ASPECT THAT MIGHT HAVE THRILLED EVEN FIRMER NERVES THAN MY OWN.
--GLARED UPON ME IN A THOUSAND DIRECTIONS...

UNREAL!
EVEN WHILE I BREATHED THERE CAME TO MY NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF THE VAPOUR OF HEATED IRON!
A SUFFOCATING ODOUR PERVADED THE PRISON!
A RICHER TINT OF CRIMSON DIFFUSED ITSELF OVER THE PICTURED HORRORS OF BLOOD.
I PANTED!
I GASPED FOR BREATH!
THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT OF THE DESIGN OF MY TORMENTORS.
AMID THE THOUGHT OF THE FIERY DESTRUCTION THAT IMPENDED, THE IDEA OF THE COOLNESS OF THE WELL CAME OVER MY SOUL LIKE BALM.
TLUD
I RUSHED TO ITS DEADLY BRINK.
I THREW MY STRAINING VISION BELOW.
THE GLARE FROM THE ENKINDLED ROOF ILLUMINED IN INMOST RECESSES. YET, FOR A WILD MOMENT, DID MY SPIRIT REFUSE TO COMPREHEND THE MEANING OF WHAT I SAW.
OH! ANY HORROR BUT THIS!

THERE HAD BEEN A SECOND CHANGE IN THE CELL... AND NOW THE CHANGE WAS OBVIOUSLY IN THE FORM.
THE INQUISITIONAL VENGEANCE HAD BEEN HURRIED BY MY TWO-FOLD ESCAPE--
--AND THERE WAS TO BE NO MORE DALLYING WITH THE KING OF TERRORS.
THE ROOM HAD BEEN A SQUARE. I SAW THAT TWO OF ITS IRON ANGLES WERE NOW ACUTE... TWO, CONSEQUENTLY, OBTUSE.
THE FEARFUL DIFFERENCE QUICKLY INCREASED WITH A LOW RUMBLING OR MOANING SOUND.
WHIRRRRRR
IN AN INSTANT THE APARTMENT HAD SHIFTED ITS FORM INTO THAT OF A LOZENGE, BUT THE ALTERATION STOPPED NOT HERE.
DEATH!
ANY DEATH BUT THAT OF THE PIT!
FOOL! MIGHT I HAVE KNOWN THAT... INTO THE PIT... IT WAS THE OBJECT OF THE BURNING IRON TO URGE ME?

I SHRANK BACK... BUT CLOSING WALLS PRESSED ME RESISTLESSLY ONWARD.

AT LENGTH FOR MY SEARED AND WRITHING BODY THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY INCH OF FOOTHOLD ON THE FIRM FLOOR OF THE PRISON.

I STRUGGLED NO MORE. BUT THE AGONY OF MY SOUL FOUND VENT IN ONE LOUD, LONG --

--AND FINAL SCREAM OF DESPAIR.

FALLEEEAAASSS

I FELT THAT I TOTTERED UPON THE BRINK --

--I AVERTED MY EYES --

THERE WAS A DISCORDANT HUM OF HUMAN VOICES!

THERE WAS A LOUD BLAST AS OF MANY TRUMPETS!

THERE WAS A HARSH GRATING AS OF A THOUSAND THUNDERS!

THE FIERY WALLS RUSHED BACK!

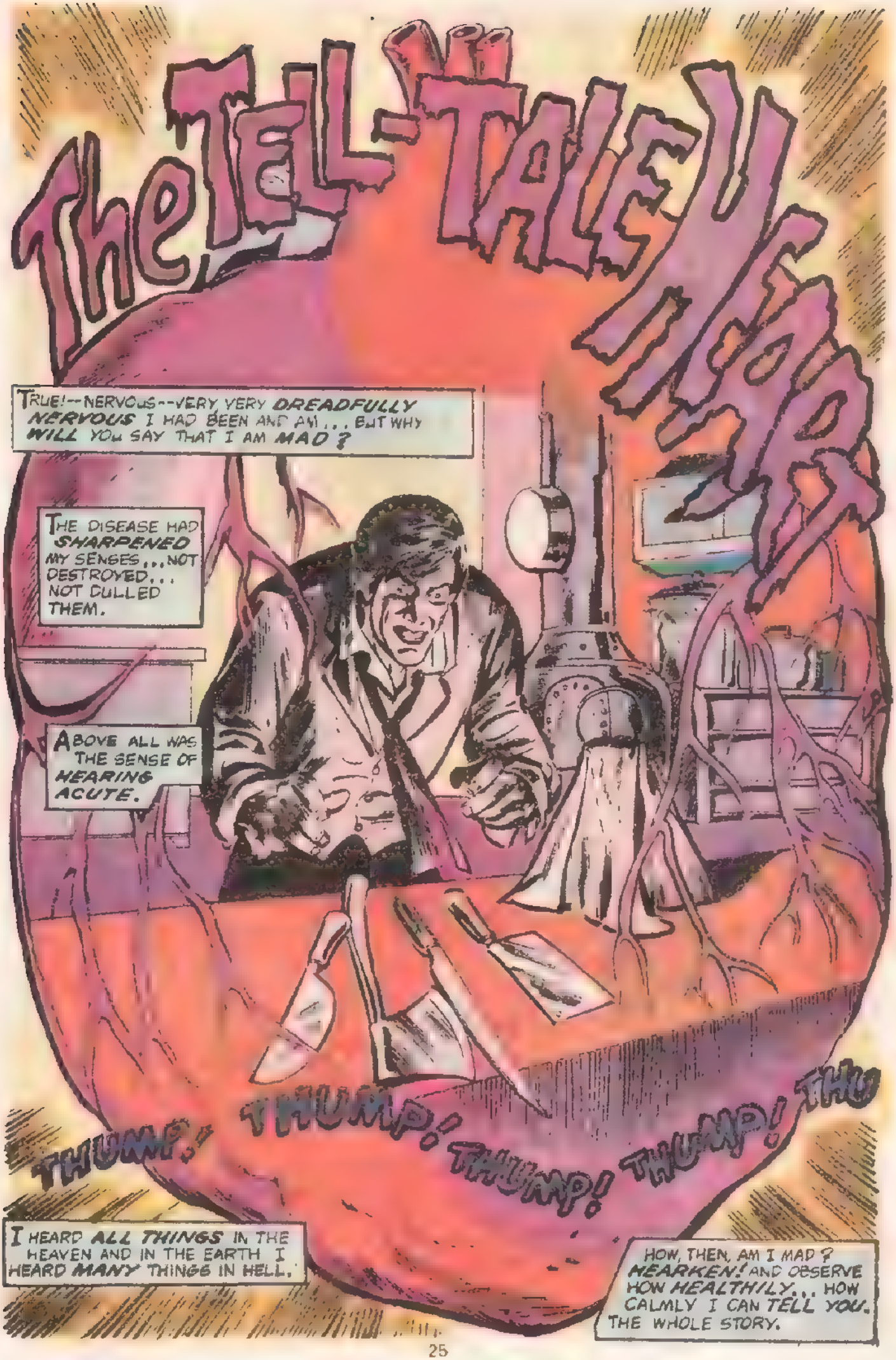
AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM CAUGHT MY OWN AS I FELL... FAINTING... INTO THE ABYSS.

IT WAS THAT OF GENERAL LASALLE.

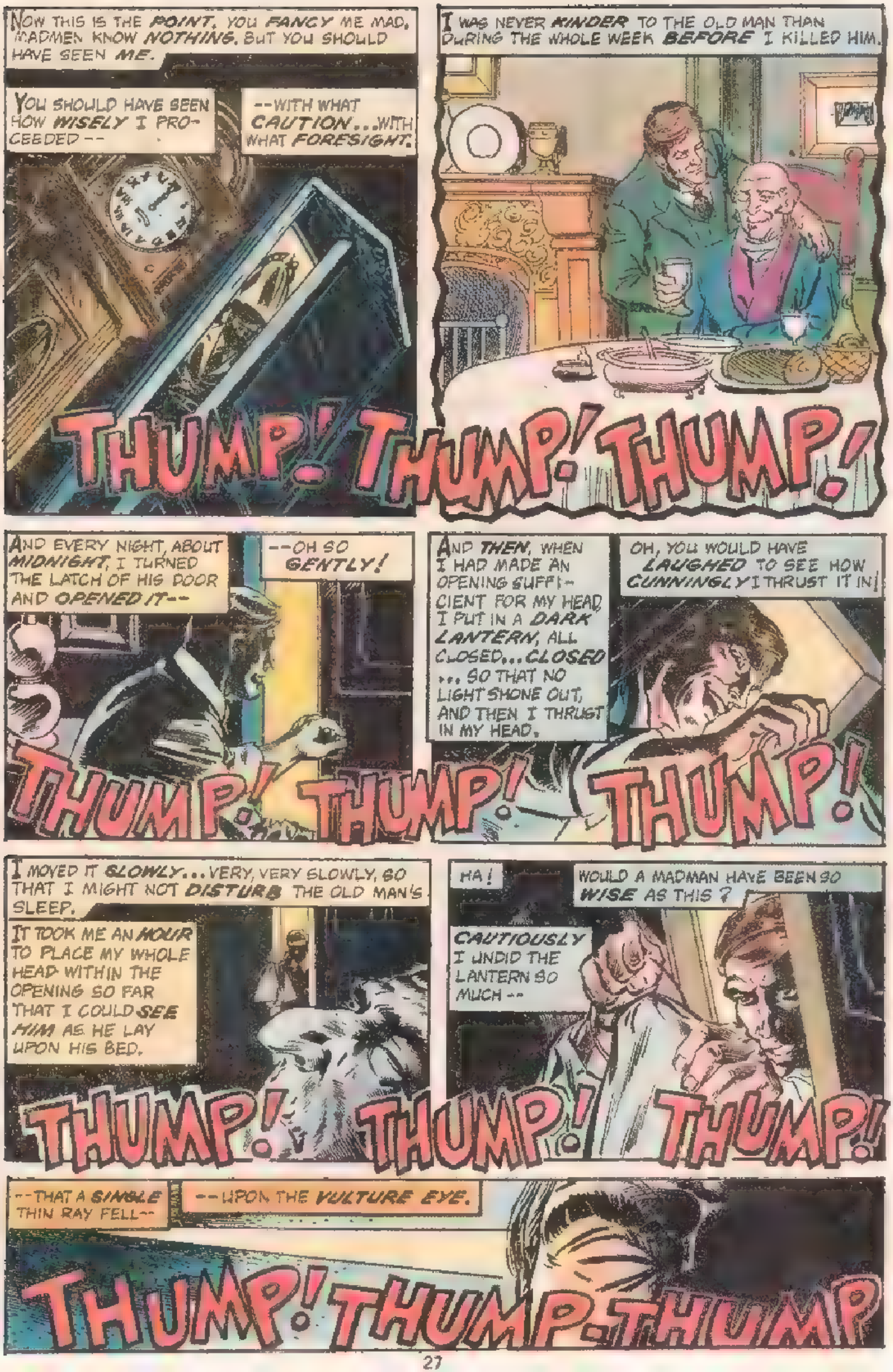
THE FRENCH ARMY HAD ENTERED TOLEDO.

THE INQUISITION WAS IN THE HANDS OF ITS ENEMIES.

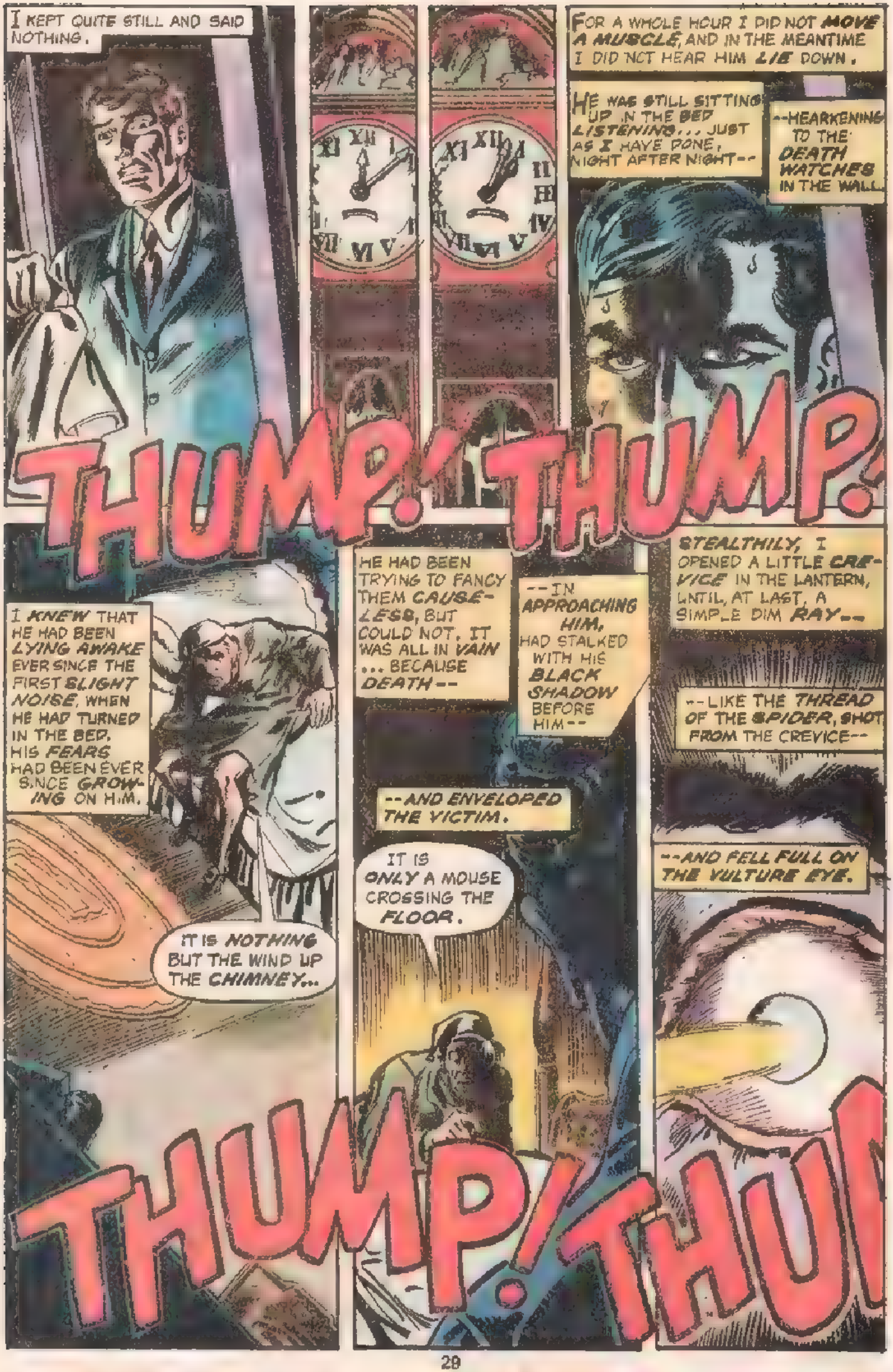
FIN.

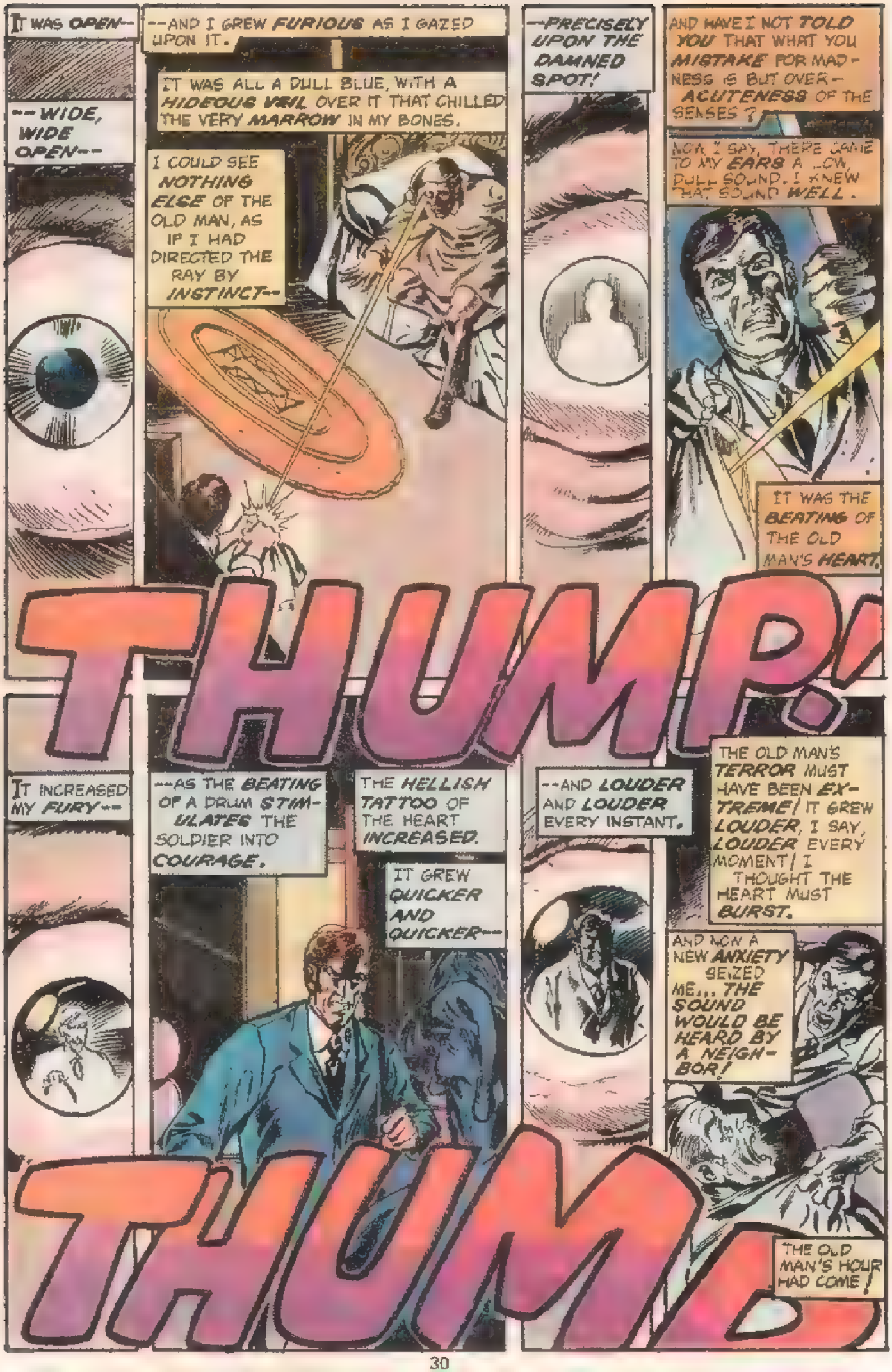

The TELL-TALE HEART
TRUE!--NERVOUS--VERY VERY DREADFULLY NERVOUS I HAD BEEN AND AM... BUT WHY WILL YOU SAY THAT I AM MAD?
THE DISEASE HAD SHARPENED MY SENSES...NOT DESTROYED... NOT DULLED THEM.
ABOVE ALL WAS THE SENSE OF HEARING ACUTE.
THUNK! THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THU
I HEARD ALL THINGS IN THE HEAVEN AND IN THE EARTH I HEARD MANY THINGS IN HELL.
HOW, THEN, AM I MAD? HEARKEN! AND OBSERVE HOW HEALTHILY... HOW CALMLY I CAN TELL YOU. THE WHOLE STORY.

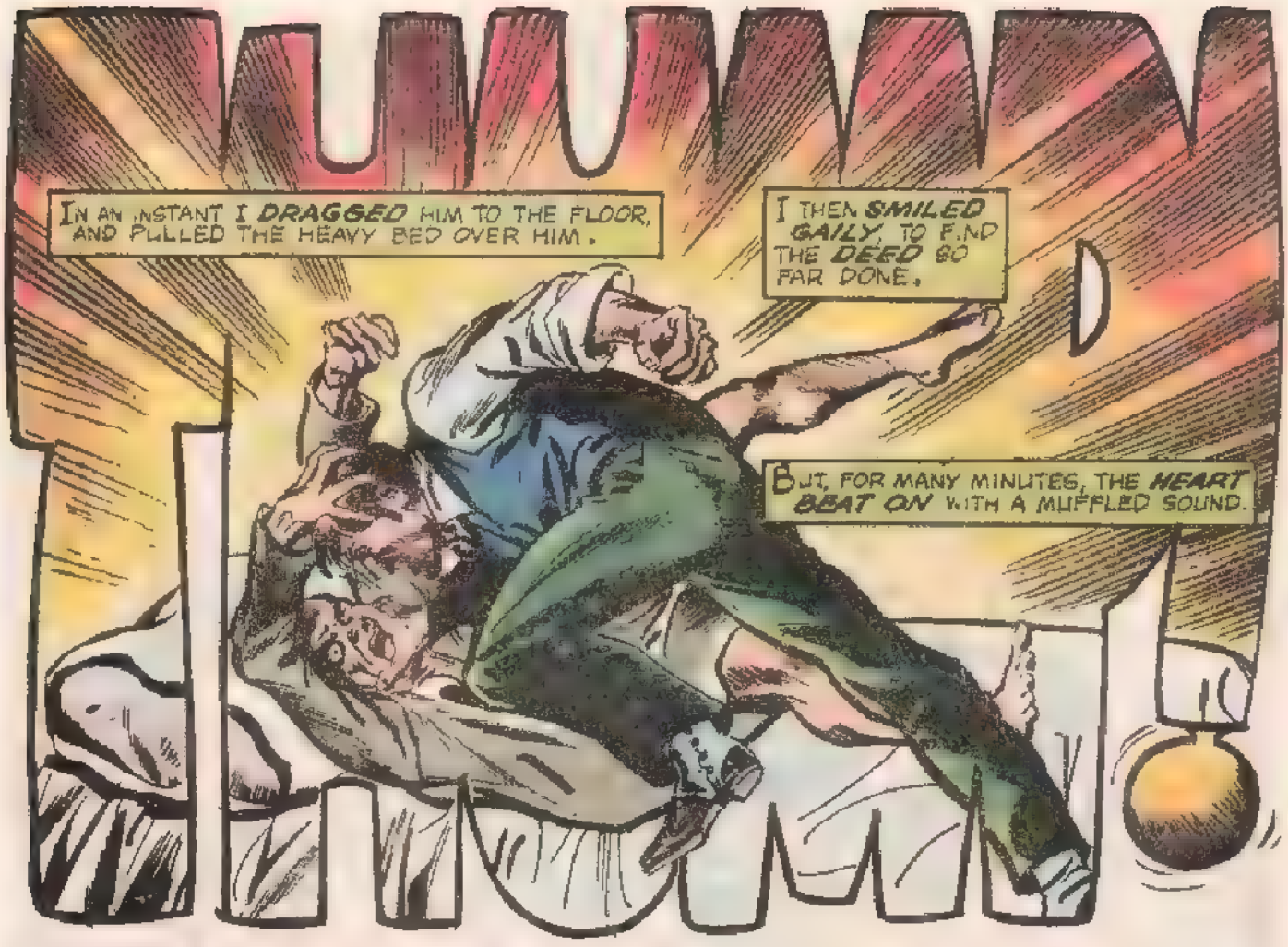
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY HOW FIRST THE IDEA ENTERED MY BRAIN--
--BUT ONCE CONCEIVED, IT HAUNTED ME DAY AND NIGHT.
THUMP!
THUMP!
OBJECT THERE WAS NONE, PASSION THERE WAS NONE.
I LOVED THE OLD MAN. HE HAD NEVER WRONGED ME.
THUMP! THUMP!
I THINK IT WAS HIS EYE!
YES, IT WAS THIS:
HE HAD THE EYE OF A VULTURE... A PALE BLUE EYE, WITH A FILM OVER IT.
WHENEVER IT FELL UPON ME, MY BLOOD RUN COLD--
THUMP- THUMP-
--AND SO BY DEGREES--
--VERY GRADUALLY--
--I MADE UP MY MIND TO TAKE THE LIFE OF THE OLD MAN--
--AND THUS RID MYSELF OF THE EYE FOREVER.
THUMP! THUMP

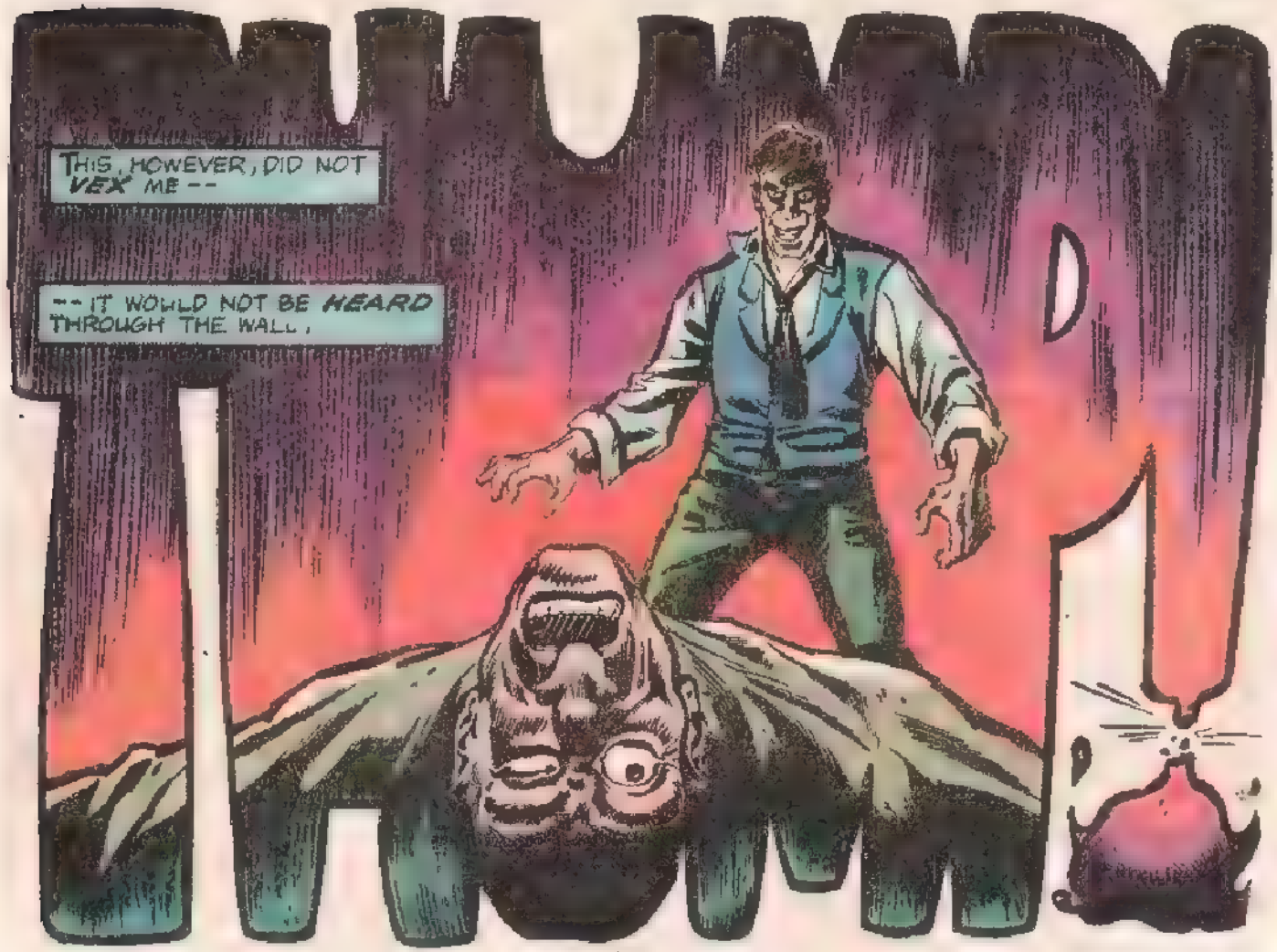

NOW THIS IS THE POINT. YOU FANCY ME MAD. MADMEN KNOW NOTHING. BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME.
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HOW WISELY I PROCEEDED --
--WITH WHAT CAUTION...WITH WHAT FORESIGHT.
I WAS NEVER KINDER TO THE OLD MAN THAN DURING THE WHOLE WEEK BEFORE I KILLED HIM.
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
AND EVERY NIGHT, ABOUT MIDNIGHT, I TURNED THE LATCH OF HIS DOOR AND OPENED IT--
--OH SO GENTLY!
AND THEN, WHEN I HAD MADE AN OPENING SUFFICIENT FOR MY HEAD I PUT IN A DARK LANTERN, ALL CLOSED...CLOSED ...SO THAT NO LIGHT SHONE OUT, AND THEN I THRUST IN MY HEAD.
OH, YOU WOULD HAVE LAUGHED TO SEE HOW CUNNINGLY I THRUST IT IN!
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
I MOVED IT SLOWLY...VERY, VERY SLOWLY, SO THAT I MIGHT NOT DISTURB THE OLD MAN'S SLEEP.
IT TOOK ME AN HOUR TO PLACE MY WHOLE HEAD WITHIN THE OPENING SO FAR THAT I COULD SEE HIM AS HE LAY UPON HIS BED.
HA!
WOULD A MADMAN HAVE BEEN SO WISE AS THIS?
CAUTIOUSLY I UNDID THE LANTERN SO MUCH --
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
--THAT A SINGLE THIN RAY FELL--
--UPON THE VULTURE EYE.
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

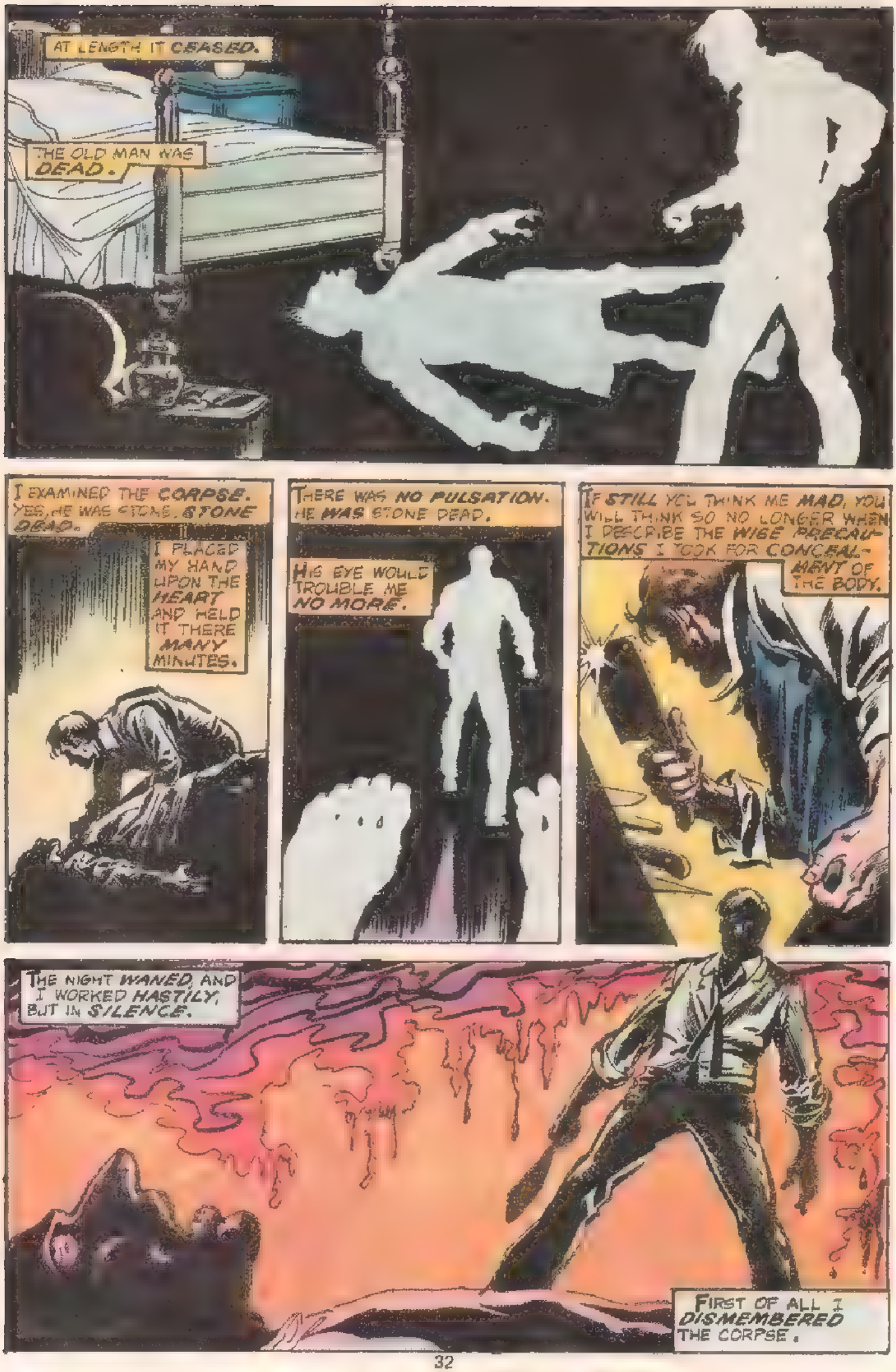
AND THIS I DID FOR SEVEN LONG NIGHTS... EVERY NIGHT JUST AT MIDNIGHT... BUT I FOUND THE EYE ALWAYS CLOSED... AND SO IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DO THE WORK... FOR IT WAS NOT THE OLD MAN WHO VEXED ME... BUT HIS EVIL EYE.
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
UPON THE EIGHTH NIGHT I WAS MORE THAN USUALLY CAUTIOUS IN OPENING THE DOOR
I COULD SCARCELY CONTAIN MY FEELINGS OF TRIUMPH. TO THINK THAT HERE I WAS, OPENING THE DOOR LITTLE BY LITTLE, AND HE NOT EVEN TO DREAM OF MY SECRET DEEDS OR THOUGHTS.
THUMP! THUMP!
I FAIRLY CHUCKLED AT THE IDEA ... AND PERHAPS HE HEARD ME... FOR HE MOVED ON THE BED SUDDENLY, AS IF STARTLED.
THUMP! THU
WHO'S THERE?
THUMP! THU

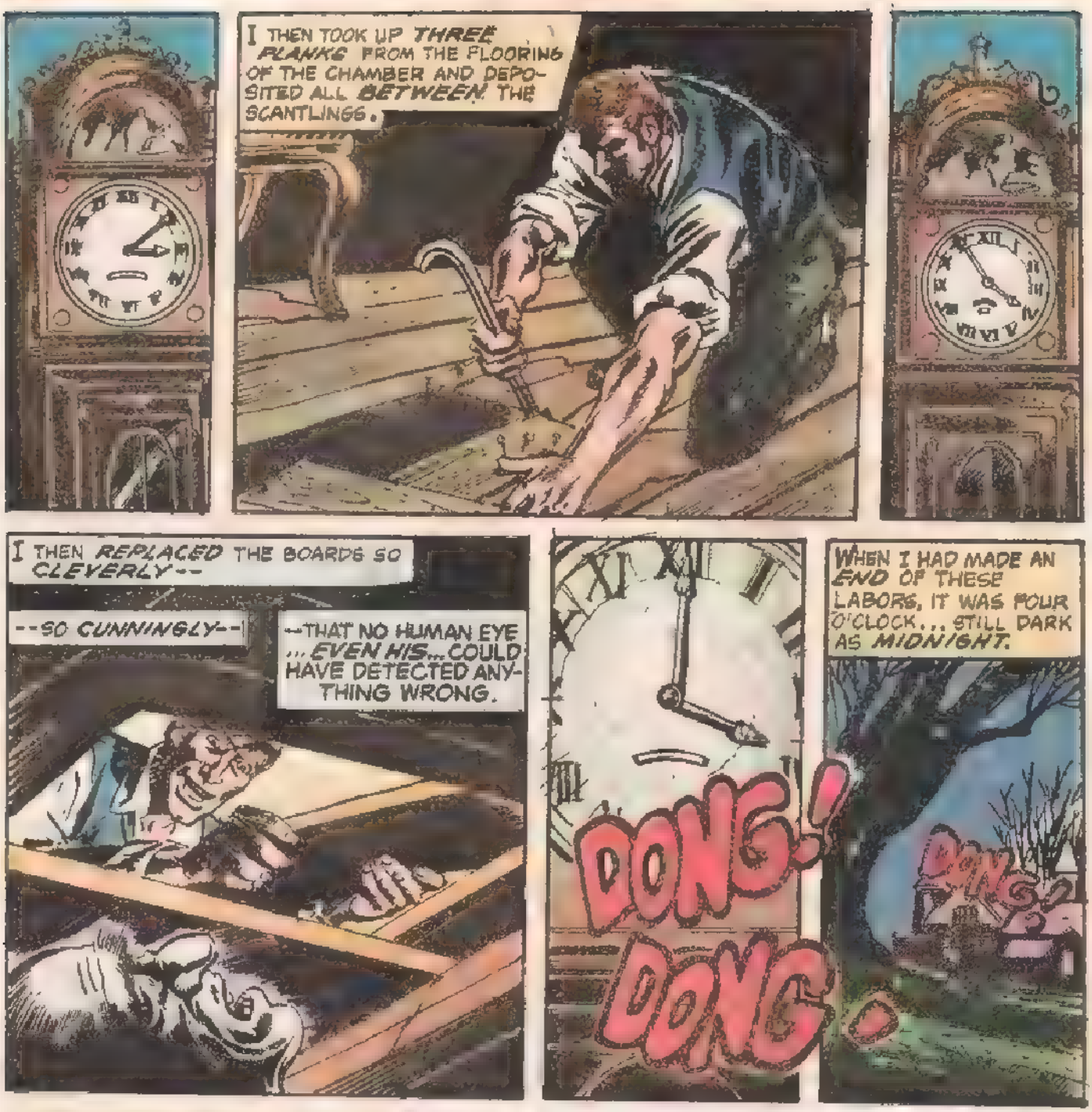

I KEPT QUITE STILL AND SAID NOTHING.
FOR A WHOLE HOUR I DID NOT MOVE A MUSCLE, AND IN THE MEANTIME I DID NOT HEAR HIM LIE DOWN.
HE WAS STILL SITTING UP IN THE BED LISTENING... JUST AS I HAVE DONE, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT--
--HEARKENING TO THE DEATH WATCHES IN THE WALL.
THUMP! THUMP!
I KNEW THAT HE HAD BEEN LYING AWAKE EVER SINCE THE FIRST SLIGHT NOISE, WHEN HE HAD TURNED IN THE BED. HIS FEARS HAD BEEN EVER SINCE GROWING ON HIM.
HE HAD BEEN TRYING TO FANCY THEM CAUSELESS, BUT COULD NOT. IT WAS ALL IN VAIN ... BECAUSE DEATH--
--IN APPROACHING HIM, HAD STALKED WITH HIS BLACK SHADOW BEFORE HIM--
STEALTHILY, I OPENED A LITTLE CREVICE IN THE LANTERN, UNTIL, AT LAST, A SIMPLE DIM RAY--
--LIKE THE THREAD OF THE SPIDER, SHOT FROM THE CREVICE--
--AND ENVELOPED THE VICTIM.
--AND FELL FULL ON THE VULTURE EYE.
IT IS NOTHING BUT THE WIND UP THE CHIMNEY...
IT IS ONLY A MOUSE CROSSING THE FLOOR.
THUMP! THU


IT WAS OPEN--
--WIDE, WIDE OPEN--
--AND I GREW FURIOUS AS I GAZED UPON IT.
IT WAS ALL A DULL BLUE, WITH A HIDEOUS VEIL OVER IT THAT CHILLED THE VERY MARROW IN MY BONES.
I COULD SEE NOTHING ELSE OF THE OLD MAN, AS IF I HAD DIRECTED THE RAY BY INSTINCT--
--PRECISELY UPON THE DAMNED SPOT!
AND HAVE I NOT TOLD YOU THAT WHAT YOU MISTAKE FOR MADNESS IS BUT OVER-ACUTENESS OF THE SENSES?
NOW I SAY, THERE CAME TO MY EARS A LOW, DULL SOUND. I KNEW THAT SOUND WELL.
IT WAS THE BEATING OF THE OLD MAN'S HEART.
THUMP!
IT INCREASED MY FURY--
--AS THE BEATING OF A DRUM STIMULATES THE SOLDIER INTO COURAGE.
THE HELLISH TATTOO OF THE HEART INCREASED.
IT GREW QUICKER AND QUICKER--
--AND LOUDER AND LOUDER EVERY INSTANT.
THE OLD MAN'S TERROR MUST HAVE BEEN EXTREME! IT GREW LOUDER, I SAY, LOUDER EVERY MOMENT! I THOUGHT THE HEART MUST BURST.
AND NOW A NEW ANXIETY SEIZED ME... THE SOUND WOULD BE HEARD BY A NEIGHBOR!
THUM
THE OLD MAN'S HOUR HAD COME!


IN AN INSTANT I DRAGGED HIM TO THE FLOOR, AND PULLED THE HEAVY BED OVER HIM.
I THEN SMILED GAILY TO FIND THE DEED SO FAR DONE.
BUT, FOR MANY MINUTES, THE HEART BEAT ON WITH A MUFFLED SOUND.


THIS, HOWEVER, DID NOT VEX ME--
--IT WOULD NOT BE HEARD THROUGH THE WALL.


AT LENGTH IT CEASED.
THE OLD MAN WAS DEAD.
I EXAMINED THE CORPSE. YES, HE WAS STONE, STONE DEAD.
I PLACED MY HAND UPON THE HEART AND HELD IT THERE MANY MINUTES.
THERE WAS NO PULSATION. HE WAS STONE DEAD.
HIS EYE WOULD TROUBLE ME NO MORE.
IF STILL YOU THINK ME MAD, YOU WILL THINK SO NO LONGER WHEN I DESCRIBE THE WISE PRECAUTIONS I TOOK FOR CONCEALMENT OF THE BODY.
THE NIGHT WANED, AND I WORKED HASTILY, BUT IN SILENCE.
FIRST OF ALL I DISMEMBERED THE CORPSE.

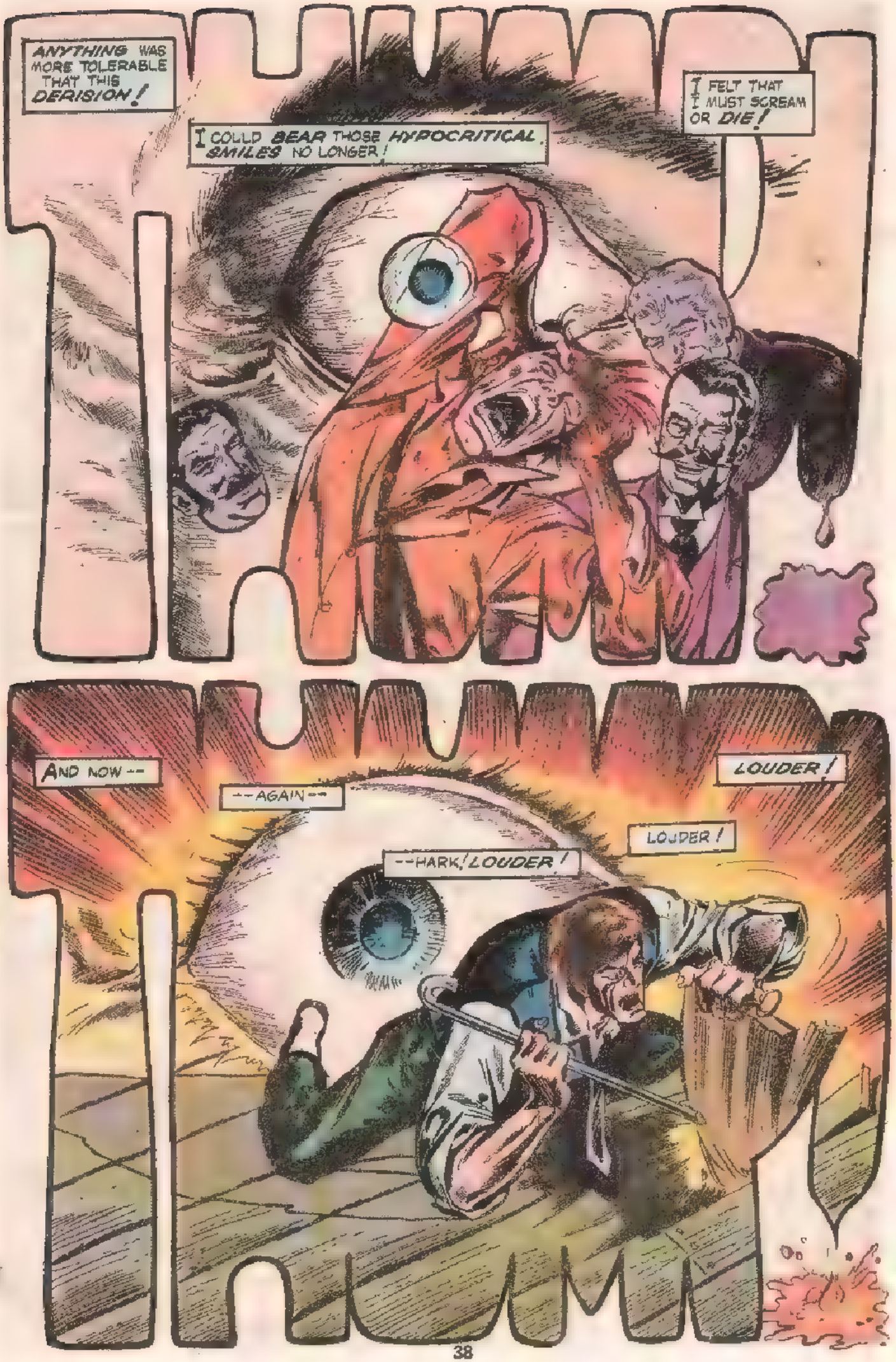

I THEN TOOK UP THREE PLANKS FROM THE FLOORING OF THE CHAMBER AND DEPOSITED ALL BETWEEN THE SCANTLINGS.
I THEN REPLACED THE BOARDS SO CLEVERLY--
--SO CUNNINGLY--
--THAT NO HUMAN EYE ... EVEN HIS... COULD HAVE DETECTED ANYTHING WRONG.
DONG!
DONG!
WHEN I HAD MADE AN END OF THESE LABORS, IT WAS FOUR O'CLOCK... STILL DARK AS MIDNIGHT.
DONG!
AS THE BELL SOUNDED THE HOUR, THERE CAME A KNOCKING AT THE STREET DOOR.
DONG!
I WENT DOWN TO OPEN IT WITH A LIGHT HEART--
--FOR WHAT HAD I NOW TO FEAR?

YES?
WE'RE POLICEMEN SIR. A SHRIEK WAS HEARD BY A NEIGHBOR DURING THE NIGHT--
--I'M AFRAID IT'S ARROUSED A SUSPICION OF FOUL PLAY. THE INFORMATION WAS LODGED AT THE POLICE OFFICE--
--AND WE HAVE BEEN DEPUTED TO SEARCH THE PREMISES.
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
I SMILED...FOR WHAT HAD I TO FEAR?
COME IN, COME IN, WON'T YOU?
THE SHRIEK HEARD WAS BUT MY OWN... I'M SO SORRY YOU WERE TROUBLED. BAD DREAM, DON'T YOU KNOW?
THE OLD MAN IS ABSENT JUST NOW...HE'S GONE ...TO THE COUNTRY, YES, THAT'S WHERE HE'S GONE.
BUT PLEASE, SEARCH...SEARCH WELL.
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
IN THE WILD AUDACITY OF MY PERFECT TRIUMPH I PLACED MY CHAIR UPON THE VERY SPOT BENEATH WHICH REPOSED THE VICTIM.
AS YOU CAN SEE, NOTHING HAS BEEN TOUCHED. NOT HIS FORTUNE, NOT ANYTHING.
BUT COME NOW, REST FROM YOUR FATIGUES, PLEASE.
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

THE OFFICERS WERE SATISFIED
THUMP!
MY MANNER HAD CONVINCED THEM, I WAS SINGULARLY AT EASE.
THUMP!
THEY SAT, AND WHILE I ANSWERED CHEERILY, THEY CHATTED OF FAMILIAR THINGS.
THUMP!
BUT ERE LONG, I FELT MYSELF GETTING PALE AND WISHED THEM GONE.
THUMP!
MY HEAD ACHED AND I FANCIED A RINGING IN MY EARS; BUT STILL THEY SAT AND STILL THEY CHATTED.
THUMP!
THE RINGING BECAME MORE DISTINCT--
THUMP!
--IT CONTINUED AND BECAME MORE DISTINCT--
THUMP!
--I TALKED MORE FREELY TO GET RID OF THE FEELING... BUT IT CONTINUED AND GAINED DEFINITENESS--
THUMP!
--UNTIL AT LENGTH, I FOUND THAT THE NOISE WAS NOT WITHIN MY EARS.
THUMP!

NO DOUBT I NOW GREW VERY PALE... BUT I TALKED MORE FLUENTLY, AND WITH A HEIGHTENED VOICE. YET THE SOUND INCREASED --
--AND WHAT COULD I DO?
IT WAS A LOW, DULL, QUICK, SOUND.
I GASPED FOR BREATH... AND YET THE OFFICERS HEARD IT NOT.
I AROSE AND ARGUED ABOUT TRIFLES, IN A HIGH KEY AND WITH VIOLENT GESTICULATIONS... BUT THE NOISE STEADILY INCREASED.
WHY WOULD THEY NOT BE GONE?
THUMP!
THUMP!
TH
I PACED THE FLOOR TO AND FRO WITH HEAVY STRIDES, AS IF EXCITED TO FURY BY THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE MEN... BUT THE NOISE STEADILY INCREASED.
OH GOD!
WHAT COULD I DO?
I FOAMED... I RAVED... I SWORE!
I SWUNG THE CHAIR UPON WHICH I HAD BEEN SITTING, AND I GRATED UPON THE BOARDS... BUT THE NOISE AROSE OVER ALL AND CONTINUALLY INCREASED.
THUMP!
THUMP!
THUMP!
THUMP!
TH

AND STILL THE MEN CHATTED PLEASANTLY, AND SMILED.
WAS IT POSS BLE THEY HEARD NOT?
THUMP!
ALMIGHTY GOD!
NO, NO!
THEY HEARD!
THEY SUSPECTED!
THEY KNEW!
THUMP!
THEY WERE MAKING A MOCKERY OF MY MORROR!
THIS I
AND THIS I
THUMP!


ANYTHING WAS MORE TOLERABLE THAT THIS DERISION!
I COULD BEAR THOSE HYPOCRITICAL SMILES NO LONGER!
I FELT THAT I MUST SCREAM OR DIE!
AND NOW --
--AGAIN--
--HARK! LOUDER!
LOUDER!
LOUDER!

VILLAINS!
DISSEMBLE NO MORE! I ADMIT THE DEED!
TEAR UP THE PLANKS! HERE! HERE!
IT IS THE BEATING OF HIS HIDEOUS HEART!
THUMP!
THE END.

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

THE THOUSAND INJURIES OF FORTUNATO I HAD BORNE AS I BEST COULD, BUT WHEN HE VENTURED UPON INSULT, I VOWED REVENGE.

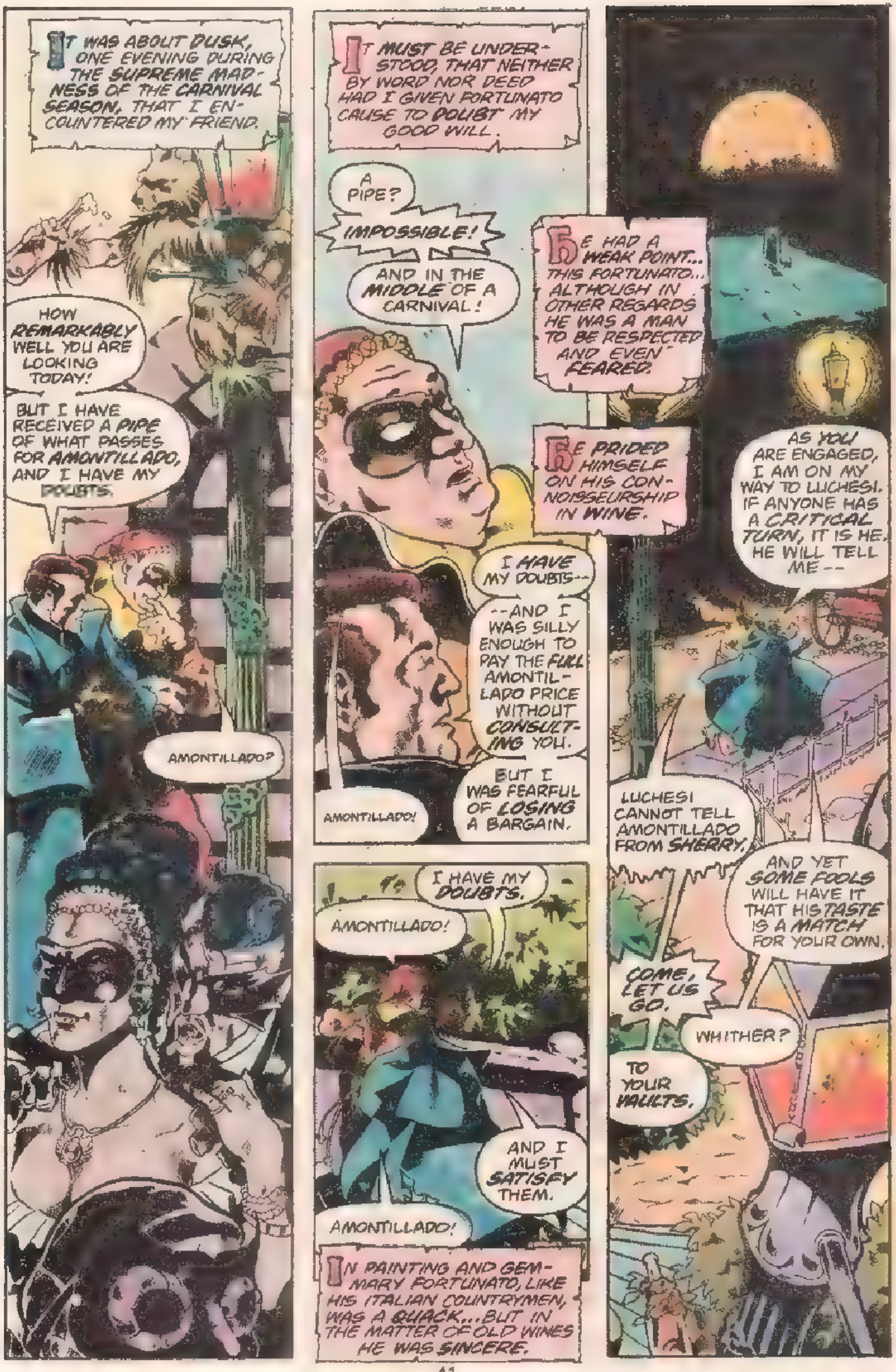
YOU, WHO SO WELL KNOW THE NATURE OF MY SOUL, WILL NOT SUPPOSE, HOWEVER, THAT I GAVE UTTERANCE TO A THREAT.

AT LENGTH I WOULD BE AVENGED--

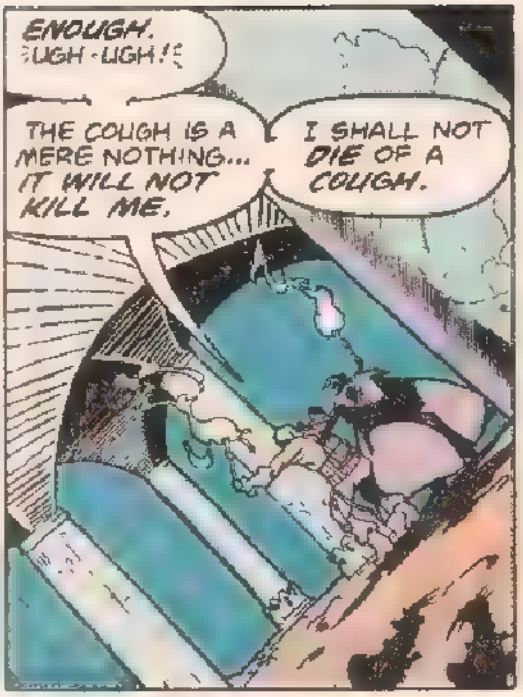
--THIS WAS A POINT DEFINITELY SETTLED ...BUT THE VERY DEFINITENESS WITH WHICH IT WAS RESOLVED PRECLUDED THE IDEA OF RISK.

I MUST NOT ONLY PUNISH... BUT PUNISH WITH IMPUNITY.

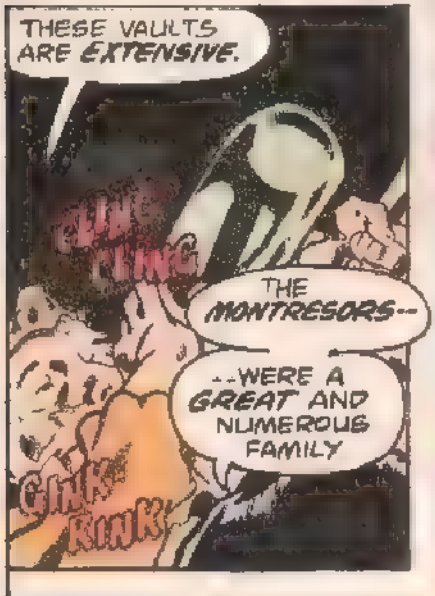
A WRONG IS UNREDRESSED WHEN RETRIBUTION OVERTAKES ITS REDRESSER. IT IS EQUALLY UNREDRESSED WHEN THE AVENGER FAILS TO MAKE HIMSELF FELT AS SUCH TO HIM WHO HAS DONE THE WRONG.

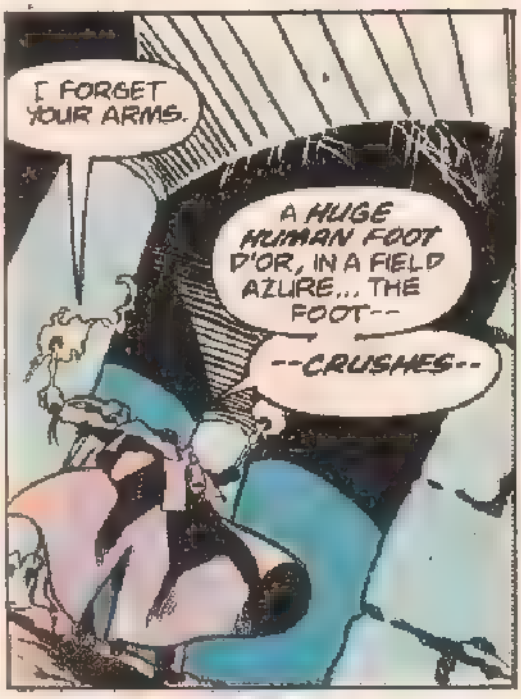

IT WAS ABOUT DUSK, ONE EVENING DURING THE SUPREME MADNESS OF THE CARNIVAL SEASON, THAT I ENCOUNTERED MY FRIEND.
HOW REMARKABLY WELL YOU ARE LOOKING TODAY!
BUT I HAVE RECEIVED A PIPE OF WHAT PASSES FOR AMONTILLADO, AND I HAVE MY DOUBTS.
AMONTILLADO?
IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD, THAT NEITHER BY WORD NOR DEED HAD I GIVEN FORTUNATO CAUSE TO DOUBT MY GOOD WILL.
A PIPE?
IMPOSSIBLE!
AND IN THE MIDDLE OF A CARNIVAL!
HE HAD A WEAK POINT... THIS FORTUNATO... ALTHOUGH IN OTHER REGARDS HE WAS A MAN TO BE RESPECTED AND EVEN FEARED.
HE PRIDED HIMSELF ON HIS CONNOISSEURSHIP IN WINE.
I HAVE MY DOUBTS--
--AND I WAS SILLY ENOUGH TO PAY THE FULL AMONTILLADO PRICE WITHOUT CONSULTING YOU.
BUT I WAS FEARFUL OF LOSING A BARGAIN.
AMONTILLADO!
I HAVE MY DOUBTS.
AMONTILLADO!
AND I MUST SATISFY THEM.
AMONTILLADO!
IN PAINTING AND GEMMARY FORTUNATO, LIKE HIS ITALIAN COUNTRYMEN, WAS A QUACK...BUT IN THE MATTER OF OLD WINES HE WAS SINCERE.
AS YOU ARE ENGAGED, I AM ON MY WAY TO LUCHESI. IF ANYONE HAS A CRITICAL TURN, IT IS HE. HE WILL TELL ME --
LUCHESI CANNOT TELL AMONTILLADO FROM SHERRY.
AND YET SOME FOOLS WILL HAVE IT THAT HIS TASTE IS A MATCH FOR YOUR OWN.
COME, LET US GO.
WHITHER?
TO YOUR VAULTS.

THERE WERE NO ATTENDANTS AT HOME; THEY HAD ABSCONDED TO MAKE MERRY IN HONOR OF THE TIME. I HAD TOLD THEM THAT I SHOULD NOT RETURN UNTIL THE MORNING, AND HAD GIVEN THEM EXPLICIT ORDERS NOT TO STIR FROM THE HOUSE.
THESE ORDERS WERE SUFFICIENT, I WELL KNEW, TO INSURE THEIR IMMEDIATE DISAPPEARANCE, ONE AND ALL, AS SOON AS MY BACK WAS TURNED.
HUGH! HUGH! HUGH!
I TOOK FROM THEIR SCONCES TWO FLAMBEAUX, AND ESCORTED FORTUNATO TO THE ARCHWAY THAT LED TO--
--THE VAULTS.
I PASSED DOWN A LONG AND WINDING STAIRCASE, REQUESTING HIM TO BE CAUTIOUS AS HE FOLLOWED.
HUGH! HUGH! HUGH!
THE PIPE?
WE CAME AT LENGTH TO THE FOOT OF THE DESCENT AND STOOD TOGETHER ON THE DAMP GROUND OF THE CATACOMBS OF THE MONTRESORS.
AH, BUT, FORTUNATO, YOU SHOULD NOT ACCOMPANY ME, NO. YOU HAVE A NASTY COLD, AND THE VAULTS ARE INSUFFERABLY DAMP.
LET US GO, NEVERTHELESS. THE COLD IS MERELY NOTHING.
AMONTILLADO.
IT IS FARTHER ON, BUT OBSERVE THE WHITE WEBWORK WHICH GLEAMS FROM THESE CAVERN WALLS.
NITER? HUGH! HUGH!
NITER.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD THAT COUGH?
IT IS-- HUGH! HUGH! --NOTHING.
COME, WE WILL GO BACK... YOUR HEALTH IS PRECIOUS. YOU ARE RICH, RESPECTED, ADMIRED, BELOVED--
--YOU ARE HAPPY--
--AS I--
--ONCE--

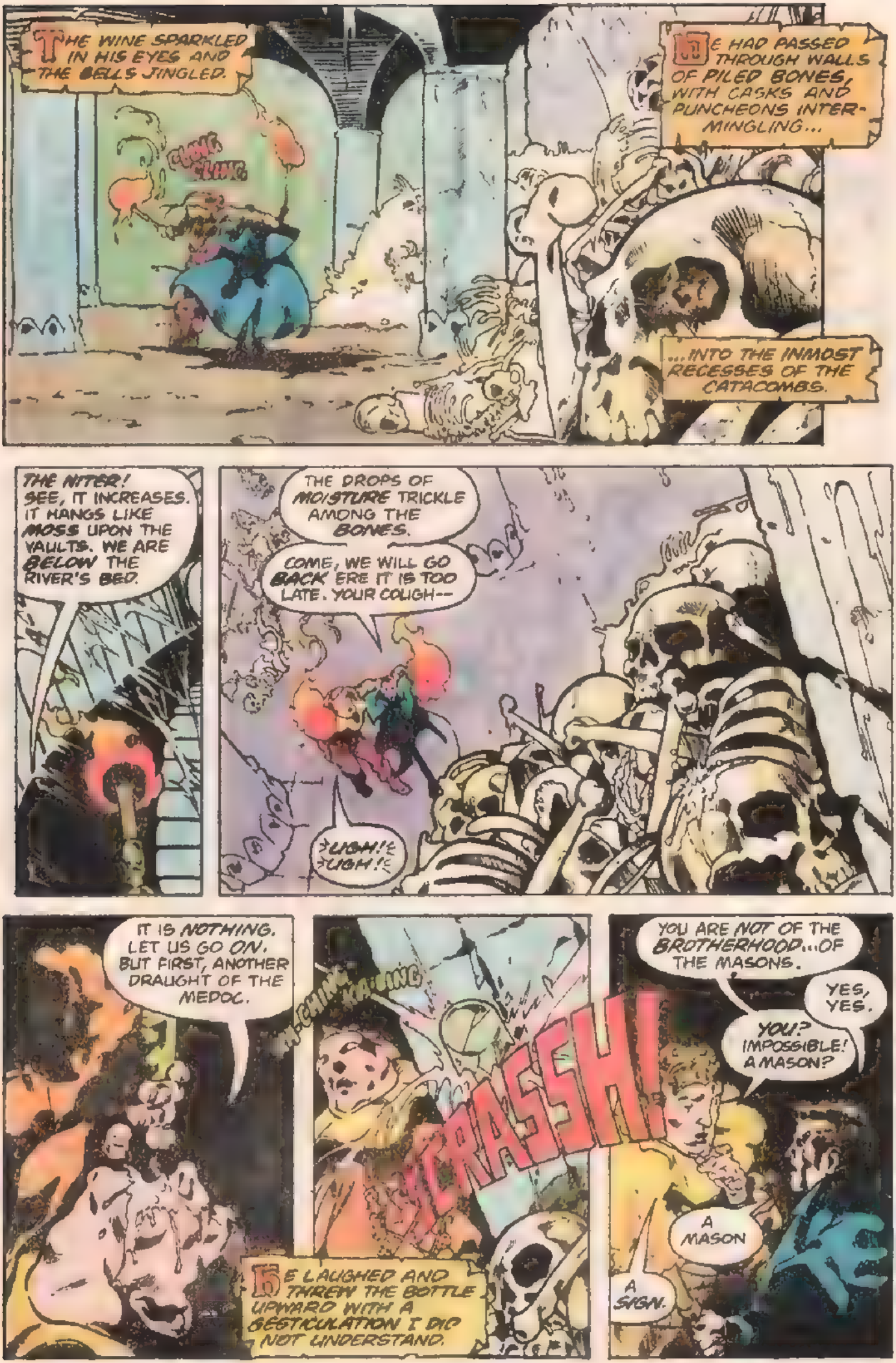


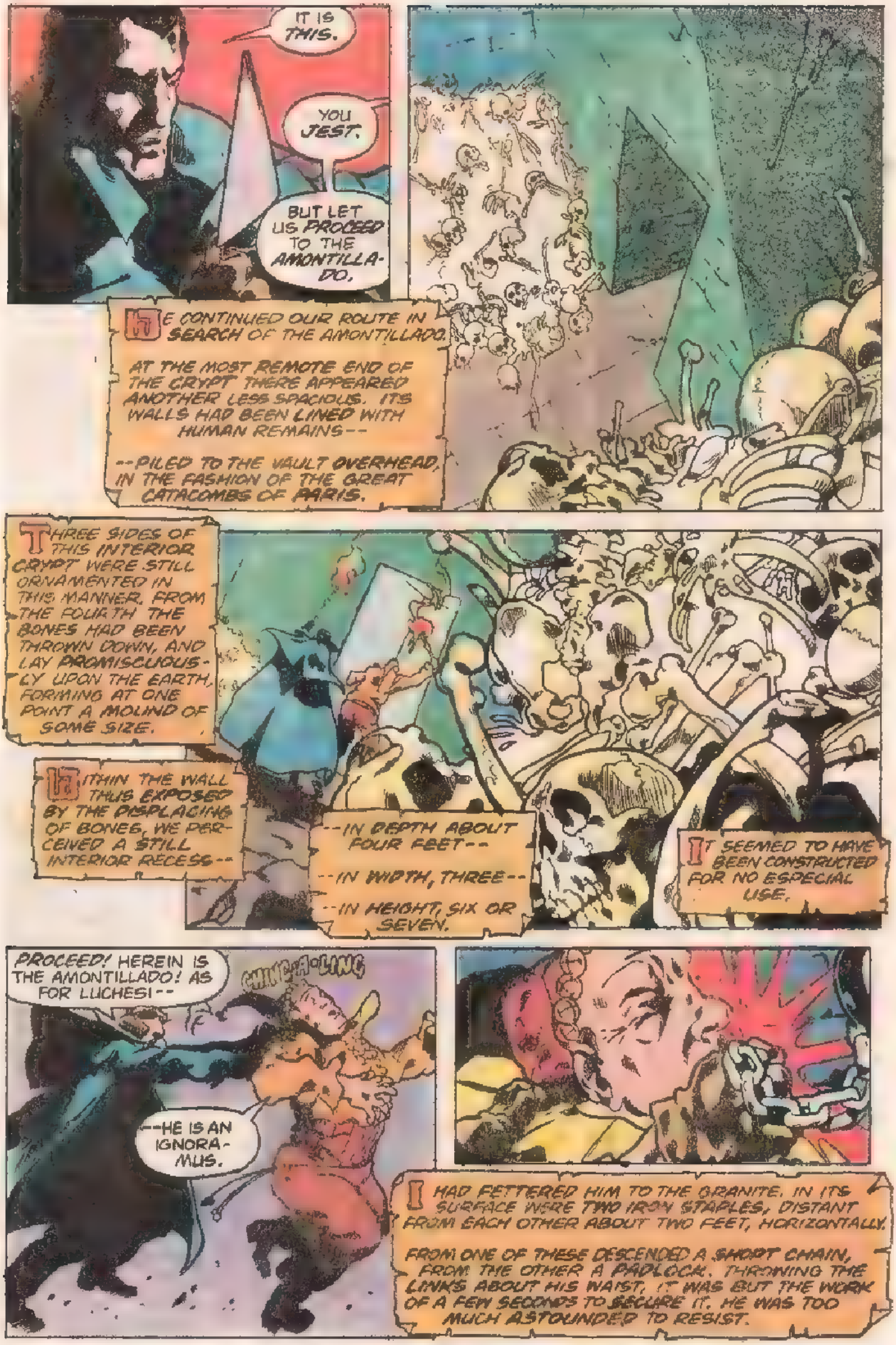
INDEED, I HAD NO INTENTION OF ALARMING YOU UNNECESSARILY ...BUT YOU SHOULD USE ALL PROPER CAUTION.
A DRAUGHT OF THIS MEDOC WILL DEFEND US FROM THE DAMPS.

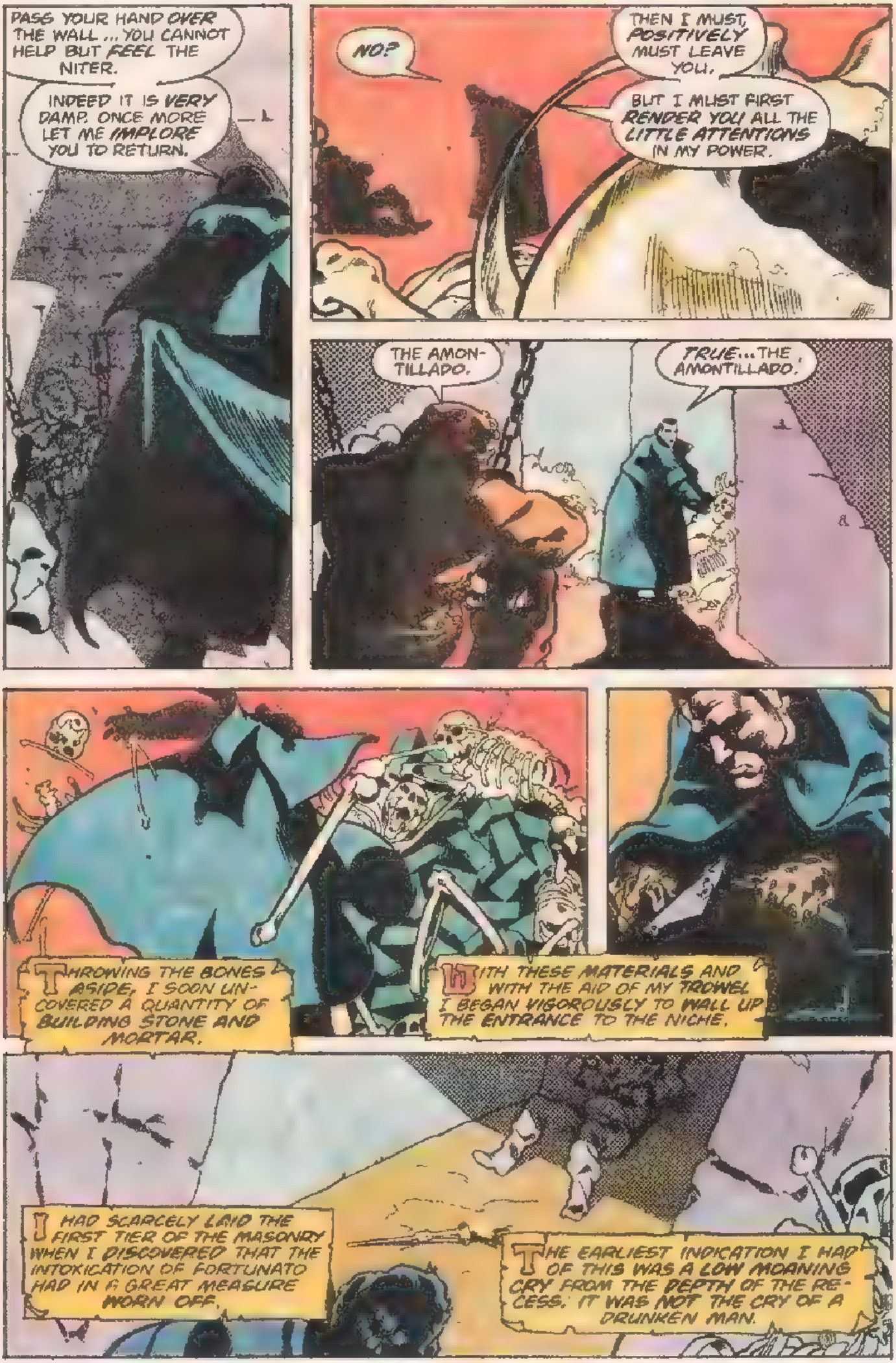




*"NO ONE OFFENDS ME WITH IMPUNITY."


THE WINE SPARKLED IN HIS EYES AND THE BELLS JINGLED.
CLINK CLINK
HE HAD PASSED THROUGH WALLS OF PILED BONES, WITH CASKS AND PUNCHEONS INTERMINGLING...
...INTO THE INMOST RECESSES OF THE CATACOMBS.
THE NITER! SEE, IT INCREASES. IT HANGS LIKE MOSS UPON THE VAULTS. WE ARE BELOW THE RIVER'S BED.
THE DROPS OF MOISTURE TRICKLE AMONG THE BONES.
COME, WE WILL GO BACK ERE IT IS TOO LATE. YOUR COUGH--
>UGH!<
>UGH!<
IT IS NOTHING. LET US GO ON. BUT FIRST, ANOTHER DRAUGHT OF THE MEDOC.
HE LAUGHED AND THREW THE BOTTLE UPWARD WITH A GESTICULATION I DID NOT UNDERSTAND.
KA-CHINK
CRASSH!
YOU ARE NOT OF THE BROTHERHOOD...OF THE MASONS.
YES, YES.
YOU? IMPOSSIBLE! A MASON?
A MASON
A SIGN.


IT IS THIS.
YOU JEST.
BUT LET US PROCEED TO THE AMONTILLADO.
HE CONTINUED OUR ROUTE IN SEARCH OF THE AMONTILLADO.
AT THE MOST REMOTE END OF THE CRYPT THERE APPEARED ANOTHER LESS SPACIOUS. ITS WALLS HAD BEEN LINED WITH HUMAN REMAINS--
--PILED TO THE VAULT OVERHEAD, IN THE FASHION OF THE GREAT CATACOMBS OF PARIS.
THREE SIDES OF THIS INTERIOR CRYPT WERE STILL ORNAMENTED IN THIS MANNER. FROM THE FOURTH THE BONES HAD BEEN THROWN DOWN, AND LAY PROMISCUOUSLY UPON THE EARTH, FORMING AT ONE POINT A MOUND OF SOME SIZE.
WITHIN THE WALL THUS EXPOSED BY THE DISPLACING OF BONES, WE PERCEIVED A STILL INTERIOR RECESS--
--IN DEPTH ABOUT FOUR FEET--
--IN WIDTH, THREE--
--IN HEIGHT, SIX OR SEVEN.
IT SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED FOR NO ESPECIAL USE.
PROCEED! HEREIN IS THE AMONTILLADO! AS FOR LUCHESI--
CLANK-A-LING
--HE IS AN IGNORAMUS.
I HAD FETTERED HIM TO THE GRANITE. IN ITS SURFACE WERE TWO IRON STAPLES, DISTANT FROM EACH OTHER ABOUT TWO FEET, HORIZONTALLY.
FROM ONE OF THESE DESCENDED A SHORT CHAIN, FROM THE OTHER A PADLOCK. THROWING THE LINKS ABOUT HIS WAIST, IT WAS BUT THE WORK OF A FEW SECONDS TO SECURE IT. HE WAS TOO MUCH ASTOUNDED TO RESIST.


PASS YOUR HAND OVER THE WALL ... YOU CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL THE NITER.
INDEED IT IS VERY DAMP. ONCE MORE LET ME IMPLORE YOU TO RETURN.
NO?
THEN I MUST, POSITIVELY MUST LEAVE YOU.
BUT I MUST FIRST RENDER YOU ALL THE LITTLE ATTENTIONS IN MY POWER.
THE AMONTILLADO.
TRUE... THE AMONTILLADO.
THROWING THE BONES ASIDE, I SOON UNCOVERED A QUANTITY OF BUILDING STONE AND MORTAR.
WITH THESE MATERIALS AND WITH THE AID OF MY TROWEL I BEGAN VIGOROUSLY TO WALL UP THE ENTRANCE TO THE NICHE.
I HAD SCARCELY LAID THE FIRST TIER OF THE MASONRY WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT THE INTOXICATION OF FORTUNATO HAD IN A GREAT MEASURE WORN OFF.
THE EARLIEST INDICATION I HAD OF THIS WAS A LOW MOANING CRY FROM THE DEPTH OF THE RECESS. IT WAS NOT THE CRY OF A DRUNKEN MAN.

THERE WAS THEN A LONG AND OBSTINATE SILENCE... THEN I HEARD THE FURIOUS VIBRATIONS OF THE CHAIN.
THE MALL WAS NOW NEARLY UPON A LEVEL WITH MY BREAST.
A SUCCESSION OF LOUD AND SHRILL SCREAMS, BURSTING SUDDENLY FROM THE THROAT OF THE CHAINED FORM, SEEMED TO THRUST ME VIOLENTLY BACK.
HEELLPP!
HELLLP
I REPLIED TO THE YELLS OF HIM WHO CLAMORED. I RE-ECHOED ...I AIDED...
...I SURPASSED THEM IN VOLUME AND IN STRENGTH.
I DID THIS...
...AND THE CLAMORER GREW STILL.
IT WAS NOW MIDNIGHT, AND MY TASK WAS DRAWING TO A CLOSE. I HAD COMPLETED THE EIGHTH, THE NINTH, AND THE TENTH TIER.
I HAD FINISHED A PORTION OF THE LAST AND THE ELEVENTH; THERE REMAINED BUT A SINGLE STONE TO BE FITTED AND PLASTERED IN.

I STRUGGLED WITH ITS WEIGHT.

BUT NOW THERE CAME FROM OUT OF THE NICHE A LOW LAUGH THAT ERECTED THE HAIRS ON MY HEAD.

HA HA HE HE

IT WAS SUCCEEDED BY A SAD VOICE, WHICH I HAD DIFFICULTY IN RECOGNIZING AS THAT OF THE NOVEL FORTUNATO.

A VERY GOOD JOKE INDEED...AN EXCELLENT JEST. WE WILL HAVE MANY A RICH LAUGH ABOUT IT AT THE PALAZZO...HE! HE! ...OVER OUR WINE ...HE! HE! HE!

THE AMONTILLADO!

YES, THE AMONTILLADO. BUT IS IT NOT GETTING LATE? WILL THEY NOT BE AWAITING US AT THE PALAZZO... LADY FORTUNATO AND THE REST?

LET US BE GONE.

YES--

--LET US BE--

--GONE.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, MONTRESOR!

TING-LING

YES--

--FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!

THERE CAME IN REPLY ONLY A JINGLING OF THE BELLS.

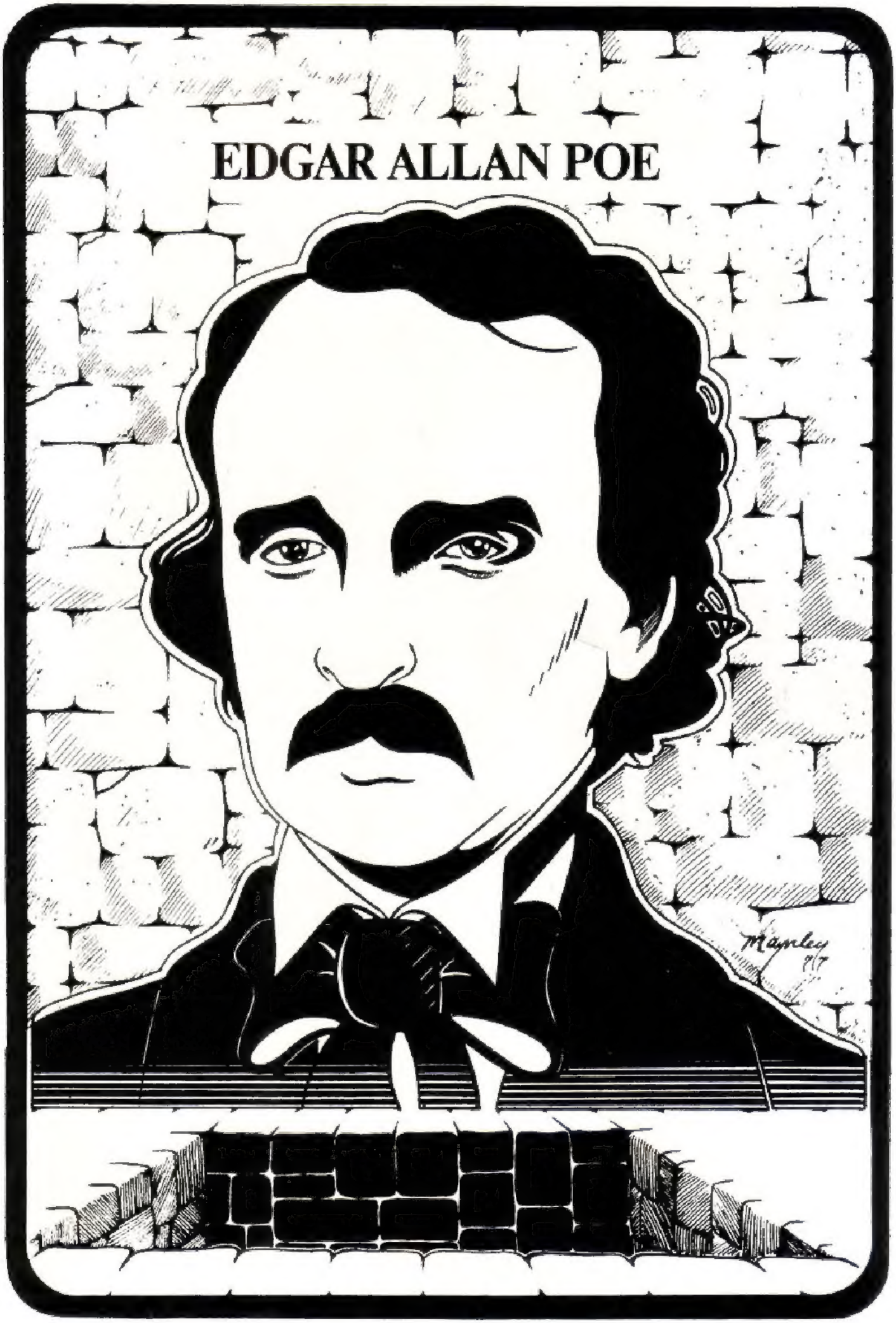
I HASTENED TO MAKE AN END OF MY LABOR.

AGAINST THE NEW MASONRY I RE-ENACTED THE OLD RAMPART OF BONES.

FOR THE HALF OF A CENTURY NO MORTAL HAS DISTURBED THEM.

IN PACE REQUIESCAT!

FIN.


EDGAR ALLAN POE
Manley

ON SALE NOW!

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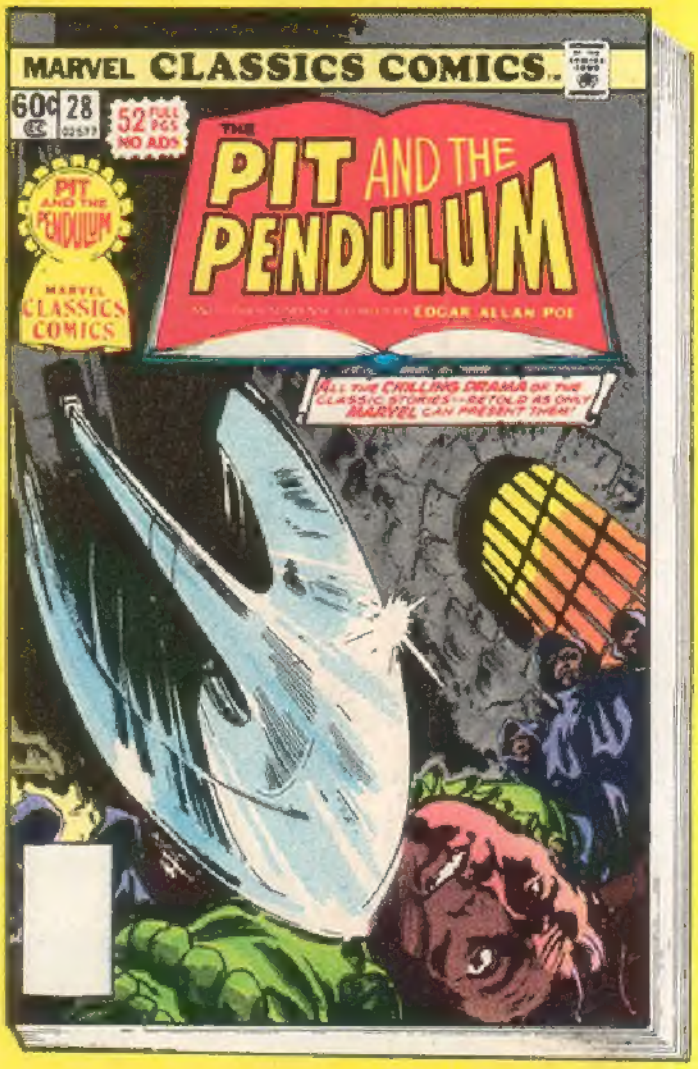

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